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DIA review(s) completed.

ARMY review(s) completed.

State Dept. review completed

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Enemy OB in North and South
Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia
1967-70

(Continued)

3 Mar 71

Deployment of NVA Armed Forces By Country

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5 Feb 71

[] Mark Pratt (State) memo re OB Figures for
Enemy Forces in Laos (Pratt [] memo (no date)
re OB Figures for Enemy Forces in Laos to be Used
in the President's Annual Foreign Policy Statement
attached)

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ARMY, DIA & DOS review(s)
completed.

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Order of Battle for Laos

Secret

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15 October 1969

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downgrading and
declassification

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15 October 1969

MEMORANDUM*

SUBJECT: Order of Battle for Laos

I. THE ORDER OF BATTLE

1. The Tables below display the Washington Intelligence Community's current estimate of order of battle strengths for Communist and Royal Laotian Government forces in Laos. These estimates of Communist force strengths in Laos will be subject to continuing review. Because we lack ground coverage in some areas of Laos and because [] data available on Communist activity in Laos is limited, our estimates of Communist strengths must perforce include educated guesses in areas where hard intelligence is lacking.

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* This Memorandum was prepared jointly by CIA, DIA, and NSA.

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2. Among the factors which need to be taken into account when considering the Ground Order of Battle in Laos are the capabilities of North Vietnam to send additional units into Laos with relative dispatch and the broad ranges in the combat effectiveness of the forces on both sides. These, and other aspects, are discussed at greater length in the sections following the Tables.

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TABLE A

ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF COMMUNIST FORCES IN LAOS^{a/}

SUMMARY

GRAND TOTAL	115,000 ^{b/}
Total NVA Forces (including NVA in PL/NVA Units)	66,600
Total PL Forces	45,700
Total DN Forces	2,700

BREAKDOWN BY FUNCTION AND AREA ^{c/d/}

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>NORTH LAOS</u>	<u>SOUTH LAOS</u>
<u>Infantry</u>			
NVA	15,500	6,600	8,900
PL/NVA ^{e/}	19,000	11,800	7,200
PL	5,400	3,200	2,200
DN	<u>2,100</u>	<u>2,100</u>	<u>0</u>
	42,000	23,700	18,300
 <u>AAA</u>			
NVA	3,850	1,000	2,850
PL/NVA ^{e/}	1,700	1,050	650
DN	<u>150</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>0</u>
	5,700	2,200	3,500

Continued on next page.

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TABLE A
(continued)

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>NORTH LAOS</u>	<u>SOUTH LAOS</u>
<u>Artillery/Armor</u>			
PL	2,050	1,650	400
DN	<u>250</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>0</u>
	2,300	1,900	400
<u>Engineer</u>			
NVA	14,700	5,250	9,450
PL	4,500	2,550	1,950
DN	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>0</u>
	19,500	8,100	11,400
<u>Command/Support^F</u>			
NVA	18,000	--	--
PL	<u>16,400</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
	34,400	--	--

- a/ Abbreviations. NVA: North Vietnamese Army; PL: Pathet Lao;
DN: Dissident Neutralist.
- b/ This figure includes the 10,000-12,000 troops of the NVA 312th Division now moving from North Vietnam into Laos. The total of 115,000 is a "best" estimate. The actual figure could be plus or minus as much as 10,000.
- c/ There is no functional breakdown available for the 312th Division and it is not therefore included in this part of the table. Because of the exclusion of this Division and the rounding of numbers, these figures will not add up to the totals shown in the summary above.

Continued on next page.

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Footnotes to Table A (continued):

- d/ For a more detailed area breakdown by province see map.
- e/ This category includes NVA advisers and NVA troops attached to PL units.
- f/ The Command and Support troops cannot be broken out by geographic area entirely, although most of the NVA troops in this category are located in south Laos and are subordinate to the NVA 559th Transportation Group, whose primary function is to support the war in South Vietnam. The 34,400 total includes headquarters and staff, signal, medical, transportation, training, security, and other support personnel.

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TABLE B

ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT FORCES

FAR (Royal Lao Army)		
Infantry	24,200	
Artillery	1,200	
Armored	1,100	
Total Combat	26,500	
Support Troops	20,500	
TOTAL FAR		47,000
FAN (Progovernment Neutralist Forces)		
Infantry	4,000	
Artillery	100	
Total Combat	4,100	
Support Troops	2,500	
TOTAL FAN		6,600
RLAF (Air Force)		1,700
River Flotilla		400
GUERRILLA FORCES ^{a/}		
Northwest Tribal Guerrillas (Yao and Others)	6,500	
Northcentral Tribal Guerrillas (Irregulars in Luang Prabang and Phong Saly Provinces)	3,500	
Meo Tribal Guerrillas (Vang Pao)	18,000	
Central Laos Tribal Guerrillas (Lao)	3,500	
South Laos Tribal Guerrillas (Lao & Kha)	4,800	
TOTAL GUERRILLAS		36,300
GRAND TOTAL		92,000

^{a/} Figures in this category are for background use only.
They should not be used or republished in any other
publication by holders of this memorandum.

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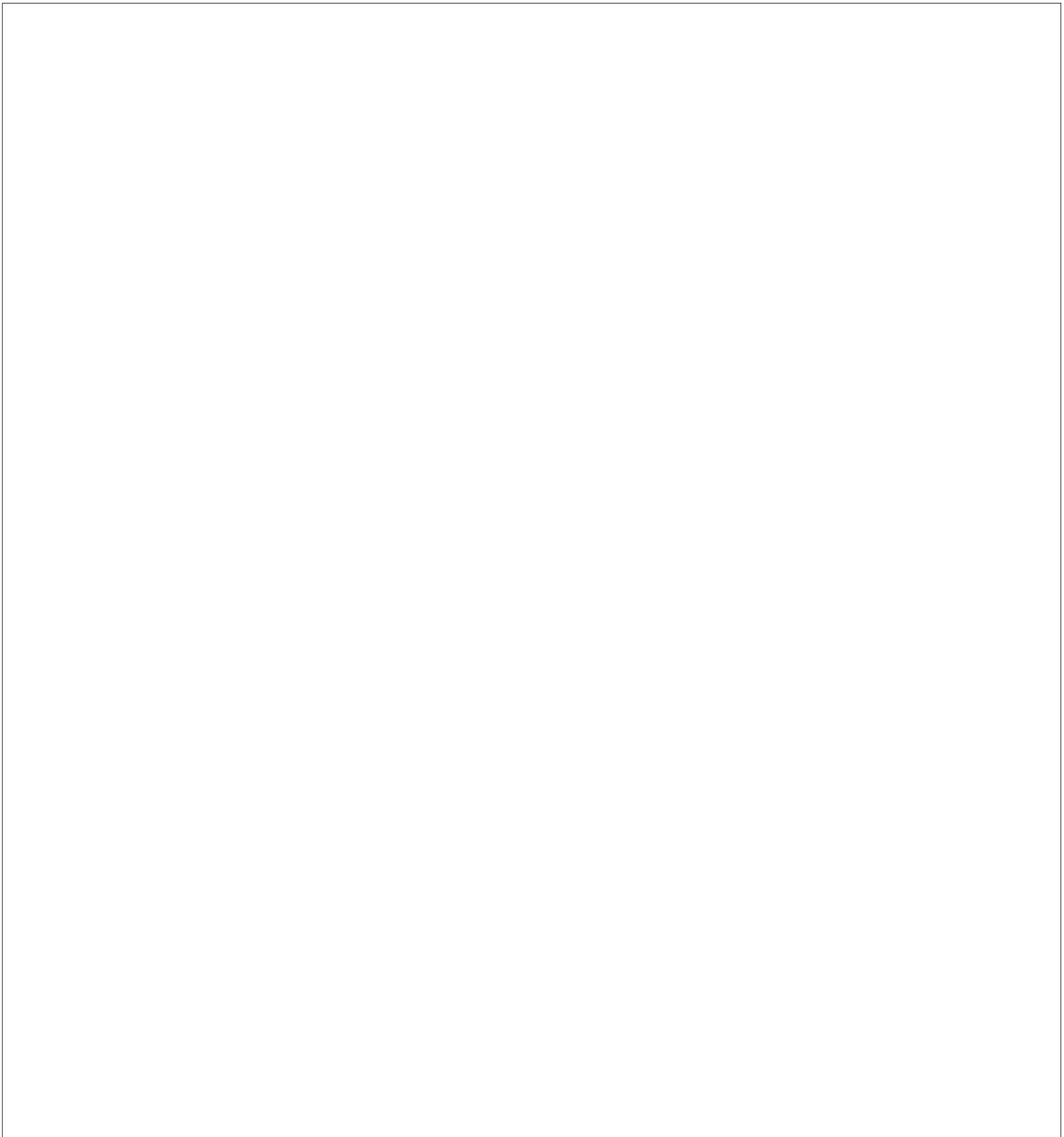
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II. COMMUNIST FORCES



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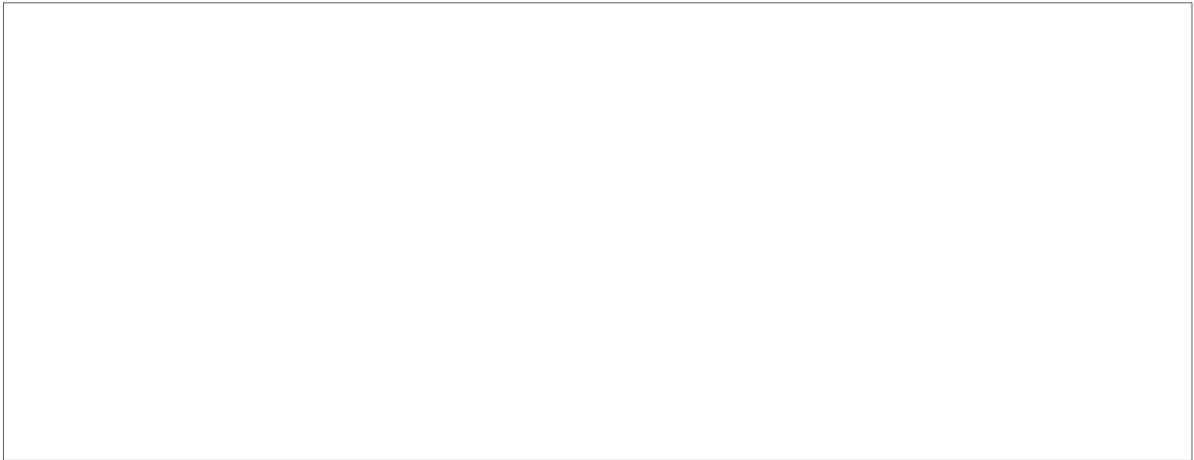
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B. Trends in Strength

10. The strength of Communist forces in Laos fluctuates each year because some NVA troops are normally withdrawn during the rainy season for rest and refitting. In general, however, the trends in Communist strengths have been upward for the past several years. Now, with the arrival of elements of the 312th Division, the total Communist military strength in Laos is probably greater than at any time in the past.

11. The PL more than doubled the size of their own forces after 1962 but in recent years there has been little or no increase in their strength, due in part at least, to the movement of the population out of PL-controlled areas.

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12. The buildup of NVA forces, on the other hand, has continued and they now outnumber PL forces. Part of this growth in NVA strength is due to the expansion of the 559th Transportation Group. But there has also been a significant increase in NVA combat forces in both north and south Laos over the past several years. Because of a lack of good evidence on the extent of Communist attrition in north Laos in recent months, we are not certain that the movement of the 312th Division into Laos will represent a large net gain in Communist strength. Nonetheless, it is significant in terms of the apparent intended concentration in the Plain of Jars.

III. ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT FORCES: TRENDS IN STRENGTH

13. In general, the effective strength of RLG forces has remained fairly constant over the past few years. FAR troops are generally in garrison-type positions in the populated areas of the Mekong lowlands. FAR recruitment is limited by budgetary restraints and the FAR has concentrated on improving, rather than expanding, its forces. The Meo guerrillas, on the other hand, are now hard pressed to find the manpower necessary to sustain troop strengths. If Meo attrition continues at the rates of recent years, Vang Pao's forces may, in fact, suffer a gradual decline in strength.

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IV. THE COMMUNIST MILITARY THREAT

A. Qualitative Factors

14. NVA forces in Laos are roughly comparable in equipment and effectiveness to NVA forces in South Vietnam. They now bear the major brunt of Communist-initiated combat operations. The PL are used primarily to hold and administer an area, once taken, and in a sense their role is "pacification". The combat effectiveness of the mixed PL/NVA units varies according to the size and role of the NVA complement. On the other hand the Dissident Neutralists are virtually of no significance as a combat threat. They appear to be maintained primarily for political purposes, as they are intended to form the military basis for the Communist claim that the Dissident Neutralists (including allied political forces) are the "true neutralists" and should replace Souvanna's neutralists in any recomposition of the coalition government along tripartite lines.

15. PL and FAR troops are probably about evenly matched in terms of the general effectiveness of individual troops or battalions, and man for man the Meo guerrillas are probably better

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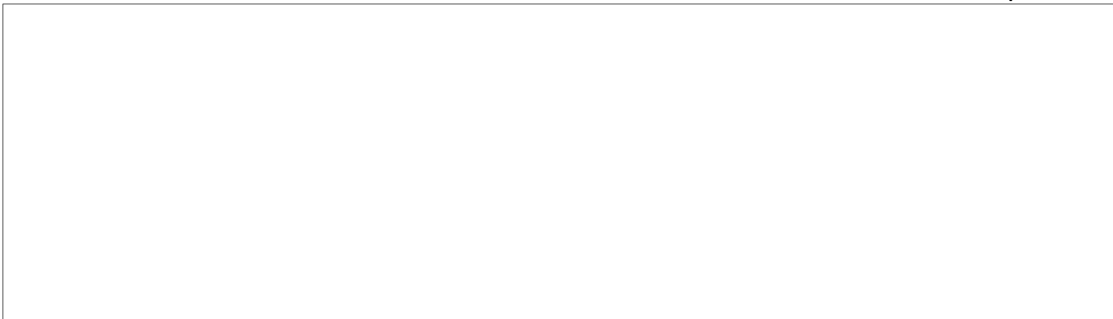


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fighters than either. The NVA forces, however, are definitely better than the FAR, and the psychological impact on the latter when attacked by the NVA is often sufficient to precipitate their defeat. This qualitative inferiority is somewhat compensated for, however, by air support provided by Royal Lao Air Force T-28s,



16. For several years, Souvanna and other RLG leaders, including the military, have felt that if it were not for the presence of NVA troops, RLG forces could probably quickly dispose of the PL threat. In our view, this is perhaps too optimistic. Although in terms of present strengths on both sides, Royal Lao forces would then outnumber those of the Pathet Lao by more than two to one, we do not believe that this numerical advantage would be decisive, in view of the many weaknesses and divisions that will continue to limit FAR effectiveness whatever enemy it confronts. We do believe that the PL would need a considerable amount of NVA support to mount any major attack, and that without such support, the RLG could almost certainly defeat any such PL offensive. We

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also believe that in northern Laos the Meo guerrillas could put considerable pressure on the PL. But RLG forces could probably not reduce PL forces and territory very rapidly without substantial outside logistical and air support.

B. The Threat to Vang Pao in North Laos

17. The strongest troops facing Vang Pao will be the fresh North Vietnamese soldiers entering Xieng Khouang Province over Route 7 from North Vietnam. If the entire 312th Division enters Laos, it will add 9 combat infantry battalions to the 33 Communist infantry battalions already in Xieng Khouang Province (10 NVA, 9 PL/NVA, 7 PL, and 7 DN). We have had no experience with the combat performance of the 312th NVA infantry division since the Dien Bien Phu battle of 1954 because the division has been used throughout the war in Vietnam as a training element. It is probable, however, that it contains some cadre with recent combat experience and is well equipped.

18. The 9 or 10 combat battalions of the 316th NVA division already present in Xieng Khouang Province are the troops Vang Pao has been confronting over the past several months. After enduring the hardships of the Meo rainy season offensive, these NVA troops

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are tired, their morale is down, their food and other supplies are low, and some of the men are sick and lack medical supplies. The 316th Division's offensive capability will gradually improve as the dry season begins. By the end of November these troops will probably have received adequate supplies and some replacements, and their combat effectiveness will have improved considerably. In the meantime they retain a significant capability for military operations.

19. The PL and the mixed PL/NVA troops can be considered together for evaluation of fighting effectiveness. They are unlikely to take a leading role in any offensive actions against RLG forces in the Plain, but they can be used in a harassing role, against guerrilla sites in efforts to tie down and divert Vang Pao's forces, as guides for NVA infantry, and to secure lines of communication and supplies. The Dissident Neutralist infantry troops of Colonel Deuane have long been ranged for political purposes against the Neutralists "loyal" to the RLG, formerly stationed at Phou Kout.

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The combat effectiveness of these Dissident Neutralist troops is poor, and they probably serve little purpose other than the maintenance of a political fiction. They, like the PL, are useful to the NVA as garrison troops and guides.

20. In contrast to the infantry, PL artillery, anti-aircraft, and even engineering units are likely to participate directly in support of any NVA offensive. The NVA's own combat support forces are of high quality and are being augmented by the support elements of the 312th Division. Neither the NVA nor the PL forces have made much use of armor in North Laos probably because of its vulnerability to air attack.

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21. NVA units currently located in Houa Phan Province could be brought south into the Plain of Jars, or could be used to attack the remaining vestiges of Meo presence in northeastern Luang Prabang Province or friendly held sites in the hills north of the Plain. Loss of these guerrilla bases would further blind Vang Pao to enemy activities to the north. Even Pathet Lao feints against these

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sites, which contain Meo women and children, would cause Vang Pao to divert some of his strength for their protection.

C. Communist Threat to Southern Laos

22. Since the rainy season is just now ending, we have no specific indications of any special efforts by the Communists in southern Laos for the coming months. [redacted] the return of 559th personnel to the Laotian Panhandle, [redacted] is a normal development at this time of the year and we believe it signals their intentions toward South Vietnam rather than Laos. There are some 53 infantry battalions present in southern Laos (21 NVA, 23 PL/NVA, and 9 PL). While some of the NVA units almost certainly are committed to security functions in support of the 559th, there are sufficient forces available to regain territory lost to RLG forces during the rainy season. A major effort in southern Laos to capture towns and territory in the Mekong Valley would probably not require major reinforcements from North Vietnam.

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D. The Reinforcement Threat From North Vietnam

23. Should North Vietnam decide to make a maximum effort rapidly to reinforce Communist troops in Laos, it could theoretically deploy

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all of its six combat infantry and three training divisions now in North Vietnam -- or possibly relocate forces now in South Vietnam. Obviously, they will not do this for a number of reasons. For one thing, they do not need any such reinforcement in Laos. Beyond this they would not want to draw down on their internal security and home defense forces to such an extent, or detract significantly from the priority of their effort in South Vietnam. They might also fear that any really major reinforcement in Laos would precipitate renewed bombing of North Vietnam or other serious [] reactions.

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24. Nevertheless, Hanoi might at some future time feel it desirable to strengthen their forces in Laos substantially. If they were to add a division or two, they might, as they did in the case of the 312th draw on divisions located in the Red River Delta area around Hanoi and dedicated to training or defense missions -- for example, the 330th or 350th Divisions. Based on the 312th performance, advance elements of such units could be inside Laos within several weeks of receiving movement orders, although a divisional unit would probably take more like two months from the original alert to the time it would be engaged in meaningful combat as a unit in Laos. If the need for speed or combat experience were

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essential, Hanoi might consider using one or more of several divisions located south of Hanoi, such as the 320th in Thanh Hoa, the 325th now in Ha Tinh, or the 308th near Hanoi. Elements of all three of these divisions have had combat experience against allied forces and all are believed to be close to TQ&E strength (12,500).

E. Chinese Communist Forces In Laos

25. The estimated force of 6,000 Chinese concentrated almost entirely in northwestern Laos are not currently considered part of the offensive threat to Laos. Since Chinese Communist roadbuilding activity in north Laos resumed a year ago, the force has been composed primarily of engineer troops with security personnel and anti-aircraft units which also carry out logistic, training, and support functions. While these Chinese have been construction-oriented, newly built support facilities, expanded air defense communications links, and increased numbers of anti-aircraft weapons provide further evidence of Chinese entrenchment in the northern area even though there is no evidence of recent augmentation of the force structure.

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CA S/I

5 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Mark S. Pratt
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific
Affairs
Department of State

SUBJECT : OB Figures for Enemy Forces in Laos

1. The following figures are CIA estimates of enemy forces in Laos. We have discussed them with DIA which refuses to coordinate until they have had an opportunity to review the actual text in which they are used.

2. The number of enemy troops deployed in Laos increased significantly during the last year. The total enemy force in Laos today is approximately 135,000 troops, including some 90,000 NVA troops and 45,000 PL troops. In Cambodia the enemy has also deployed a force numbering 50,000 - 60,000 troops of which 40,000 - 45,000 are NVA troops, and 10,000 - 15,000 are VC troops.

3. If North Vietnam were to gain control of Laos and Cambodia, Hanoi could quickly deploy a large portion of the 140,000 - 150,000 NVA and VC troops from these countries against targets in South Vietnam.

4. Since April 1970 the North Vietnamese have progressively stepped up their presence and pressures in Laos. The NVA force in South Laos has increased by more than 25,000 troops so the total force in South Laos today -- including about 15,000 Pathet Laos troops -- exceeds 75,000 troops. They have expanded their control in southern Laos by taking the towns of Saravane and Attapeu and attacking outposts in the Bolovens Plateau and at the same time have greatly expanded their logistic network in the Panhandle. Given control of the Panhandle, a good share of the 60,000 NVA troops in South Laos could be used to augment Hanoi's military threat to Cambodia or South Vietnam.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

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5 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Mark S. Pratt
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific
Affairs
Department of State

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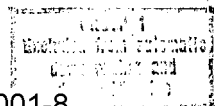
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Deputy Director
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Deputy Director
Economic Research

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5 February 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mark S. Pratt
FROM : [REDACTED] Deputy Director of Economic
Research
SUBJECT : Estimates of Communist Forces in Laos
and Cambodia to be used in the President's
Annual Foreign Policy Statement.

1. 1 February 1971, Communist combat and logistical forces in Laos are estimated at about 135,000, of which some 60,000 are in north Laos and about 75,000 in south Laos. Of the total forces, approximately 90,000 are NVA and about 45,000 are PL. In addition to these forces in Laos, there are some 50,000 to 60,000 NVA and Viet Cong in Cambodia.

2. If Hanoi were to gain control of Laos and Cambodia, a large number of the roughly 140,000 to 150,000 NVA and Viet Cong forces now occupied in these two countries would be freed to fight in South Vietnam.

3. During 1970 and early 1971 the North Vietnamese have progressively stepped up their presence and pressures in Laos, increasing their forces by more than 25,000 in

southern Laos. They have expanded their control by taking the towns of Saravane and Attapeu and at the same time have greatly expanded their logistic network in the Panhandle.

4. Comments on paragraph 4: The meaning of this paragraph is unclear to us. First, we would not agree that NVA activities in southern Laos have subsided. Second, "some of the (40,000) troops massed there" which could deploy elsewhere are already covered in paragraphs 1 and 2.

5. It might be useful to note that Hanoi also has recently (January 1971) augmented its forces in north Laos and are currently threatening the royal capital at Luang Prabang.

SECRET

LDX via Mr. Stuart

TO : [] CIA, Room 4F18 []

FROM : EA/LC - Mark S. Pratt *msp*

SUBJECT: OB Figures for Enemy Forces in Laos to be Used in the President's Annual Foreign Policy Statement

"... There are over ^{615,000} (65,000) North Vietnamese troops in Laos, and ~~over~~ (40,000) North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in Cambodia." _{50,000 to 60,000}

"... If Hanoi were to gain control of Laos and Cambodia, a large portion of the roughly ~~(100,000)~~ North Vietnamese troops now occupied in these two countries would be freed to fight in South Vietnam." _{130,000 - 140,000}

"In 1970 the North Vietnamese progressively stepped up their presence and pressures in Laos, increasing their forces by ~~(20,000)~~ and expanding their control by taking the towns of Saravane and Attapeu in Southern Laos." _{25,000}

"While North Vietnamese activities have subsided in Southern Laos, they have greatly expanded their logistic network in Southern Laos; some of the (40,000) troops massed there could move across the DMZ into South Vietnam or into Cambodia or against Laos itself." ?

Although all of the references are to North Vietnamese, it might be useful for us to have available also figures for the LPLA (and as in the case of the NVA, it would be useful to break the figures down into North and South Laos) in case some changes are made in the draft requiring these figures. In view of the 67,000 figure used in the President's March 6 statement and the reference here to a significant (20,000) increase in NVA in the Trail area, one should perhaps use as high a figure as one can justify. We would think that rather than pick out the specific figure as was done in the March 6 statement, we would prefer a range, or an approximation as is now used in the quotes.

EA/LC:MSPratt:dtm

~~homework kme--re:for~~SECRET

SECRET

Deployment of NVA Armed Forces By Country

The current strength of the North Vietnamese armed forces still deployed in North Vietnam is estimated at 365-385,000 troops. This total includes an estimated 150-170,000 ground combat troops. In addition we estimate that from 230-250,000 troops, including 135,000 - 145,000 ground combat troops are currently deployed in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The distribution of North Vietnamese armed forces by total and by number of combat troops is as follows:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total NVA Military Strength</u>	<u>NVA Ground Combat forces</u>
North Vietnam	365-385,000	150-170,000
South Vietnam	80-95,000	45-50,000
Laos	110,000	70,000
Cambodia	40-45,000	20-25,000

CIA/OER

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Haig

Attached is a recapitulation
of the NVA OB data requested
earlier today by Tom Latimer.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

*sent via
LDX*

~~3 March '71~~
(DATE)

STAT

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

13 January 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Strength and Disposition of Communist Forces in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, 1967-1970

1. The total number of Communist infantry regiments located in South Vietnam and adjacent areas of North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos has not changed much since late 1967. But their disposition, strength, and combat objectives have changed markedly during this period. The Communists' 1968 Tet Offensive and its aftermath, new enemy tactics in 1969, and the turn of events in Cambodia last spring are among the principal reasons for these changes. This memorandum reviews the estimated strengths and general disposition of Communist forces at the end of each of the last four years. See Tables 1 and 2 for detailed estimates of enemy forces levels in South Vietnam, and see the maps for the deployment of Communist infantry regiments.

SOUTH VIETNAM

VC/NVA Regular Combat Forces

2. The total strength of the enemy's regular combat forces in South Vietnam at the end of 1967 is estimated to have been between 165,000 and 185,000 men. But enemy forces were rapidly building up during the weeks just prior to the Tet Offensive that began in late January 1968; they reached an estimated peak strength of about 195,000-215,000 at that time. Most of the enemy's regimental headquarters were

concentrated in the northern provinces and to the north and northwest of Saigon. At least two but possibly as many as five regimental headquarters were in the Mekong Delta, where enemy main force units usually operated as independent battalions.

3. Although the enemy suffered very heavy casualties during 1968, high levels of infiltration, recruitment, and upgrading of local forces and guerrillas enabled the Communists to maintain the overall strength of their regular combat forces at approximately their level of December 1967. By December 1968, the strength of enemy regular forces was estimated at between 170,000 and 190,000 men.* A significant southward shift of enemy regiments from the northern provinces to the central provinces, and from the central provinces to the southern ones also occurred in 1968. By year's end, however, most of the Communists' big units were still concentrated in or near MR-1 and in the provinces surrounding Saigon. The pronounced buildup in MR-3 reflected the enemy's intention to use the sanctuaries and supply lines in Cambodia to maintain as much pressure as possible in the area near the capital. It also was a prelude to the next big, but rather ineffective, Communist offensive launched in the spring of 1969 when many of the units located along the Cambodian border moved back into MR-3.

4. After the spring offensive in 1969, the Communists began to de-emphasize the main force war and to rebuild their grass roots organization, relying more heavily on local forces and guerrillas. Hanoi made this shift in strategy in order to cut Communist manpower losses, to shore up the Viet

*The December 1968 estimate and all subsequent estimates have been revised to reflect the increases in strength indicated by the new intelligence gathered by Allied Forces in Cambodia in mid-1970. No retro-active adjustment of estimates of enemy forces prior to December 1968 has been made because information is lacking on the timing and rate of the buildup of forces in Cambodia.

Cong's political and subversive apparatus, and to put its forces in a better position to carry on the war while US forces were withdrawing. During the year some of the enemy's large units were broken down into smaller formations, and efforts were launched throughout the country to revitalize local and guerrilla forces, in part by filling them out with North Vietnamese regulars. This process was particularly evident in MR-3, where at least four regimental units were broken down to operate as independent battalions or smaller sized units.

5. These changes in 1969 were accompanied by relatively low rates of infiltration and recruitment, while the enemy continued to take comparatively high losses. As a result, by the end of 1969, the strength of the enemy's regular forces was estimated to range between 130,000 and 150,000 men, down some 40,000 from the year before. Actual losses account for only 30,000 of this net decline; the northward deployment of North Vietnamese forces out of the immediate threat area just north of the Demilitarized Zone accounts for the remaining 10,000. Another significant change in the disposition of enemy regular forces in 1969 was the influx of North Vietnamese regiments into the Mekong Delta. During the latter half of the year, five Communist regiments from MR-3 were shifted farther south to help out hard pressed enemy forces in the delta.

6. The strength of regular VC/NVA combat forces continued to decline during 1970 and is estimated at 110,000 to 125,000 men by the end of the year. This estimate includes about 30,000 combat troops that were shifted to Cambodia and southern Laos after Sihanouk was ousted last spring. The change in government in Cambodia last year is, of course, one of the main reasons for the new pattern of enemy main force deployment now. Not only was there a new war to fight in Cambodia, but the loss of the supply channel through Sihanoukville made the long overland routes through Laos and northeastern Cambodia doubly important. As a result, many of the Communist

regiments that had been based in border sanctuaries adjacent to MRs 2, 3, and 4 were moved west to fight and develop new supply lines in Cambodia; other units were sent from North Vietnam or diverted from the northern part of South Vietnam to guard against allied ground interdiction operations in the Lao panhandle. Some of the forces sent to southern Laos and Cambodia have recently been detected shifting back toward South Vietnam, but most of those pulled out in 1970 remain occupied with new tasks caused by the war in Cambodia.

7. Along with the decline in the strength of enemy's regular forces in South Vietnam last year, we continued to observe the disbanding of some regimental and battalion commands, probably reflecting severe local manpower problems as well as changes in enemy tactics. In addition to being more widely dispersed, many of the enemy's big units in South Vietnam are greatly under strength and far from full combat effectiveness. At least seven enemy regiments are now in MR-4, for example, and all are deployed in remote bases away from populated areas, and often they are kept off balance by aggressive South Vietnamese ground operations. These units help support the kind of guerrilla war at which the enemy excels, and which still poses a substantial long-term threat to South Vietnam; but they are not able under present circumstances to bring their strength to bear in the way that they did in earlier years.

Administrative Services

8. Administrative Services include those military personnel in COSVN, military region, military subregion, front, province and district staffs, and in rear service technical units of all types (e.g., engineer, medical, signal, and transportation) directly subordinate to those staff headquarters. A number of factors complicate any measurement of the trends in the strength of the VC/NVA Administrative Services.

(a) Allied field efforts have been focused largely on the collection of information on regular combat forces

because of the greater military threat they represent; and (b) the US Intelligence Community did not concern itself with a detailed study of the size and structure of the enemy's Administrative Services until early 1967. As a result, changes in estimates of the personnel in the Administrative Services from one period to another often reflect better collection and analysis of data rather than real increases or decreases in the number of units or personnel.

9. Consequently, there is no retroactive series which accurately depict trends in the strength of Administrative Services. The softness of these estimates is reflected in the relatively broad ranges assigned to them and the relatively constant force level shown during the entire period considered. The lower strength figure for Administrative Services for end of 1970 compared with end of 1969 reflects a judgment that these forces along with the regular combat forces also decreased during the year despite the fact that hard intelligence is lacking to quantify the extent of this decline accurately.

Guerrillas

10. Guerrilla forces include personnel operating in squads and platoons subordinate to hamlet and village echelons. Since the end of 1967 there has been both a qualitative and quantitative decline in the VC Guerrilla force in South Vietnam. The strength of the Guerrilla force in December 1967, estimated at 110,000-125,000 men, mirrors the heavy recruitment begun in the last half of the year in preparation for the 1968 Tet Offensive. As a result of heavy losses suffered during the Tet, May, and August Offensives and the upgrading of Guerrillas to meet the increased manpower demands by the regular combat forces, the Guerrilla force experienced an overall quantitative and qualitative decline. Subsequent recruitment was not sufficient to offset the total

attrition of Guerrilla units or to compensate for the loss of the experienced cadre who were upgraded to the regular combat forces. By the end of December 1968, Guerrilla strength had dropped to between 80,000 and 100,000 men. Erosion of the Guerrilla force continued in 1969; by the end of the year it had decreased to 60,000-80,000 men. This downward trend abated somewhat in 1970 because of the renewed emphasis on guerrilla warfare. By the end of 1970 Guerrilla forces numbered between 50,000 and 70,000.

11. Because information on the Guerrillas is more incomplete and sketchy than on the regular combat and Administrative Service personnel, we are unable to allocate the Guerrilla forces by military region as was done for the other forces shown in Table 2. Traditionally, the largest number of Guerrillas have operated in the northern two military regions of South Vietnam, where probably about 60-70 percent of the total number of Guerrillas were located prior to 1968. By early 1968, however, this percentage had changed because of the high level of military activity in the northern area and the accompanying enemy losses. By the end of 1968, it probably fell to about 40-50 percent of the total. This percentage probably remained about the same during 1969 and 1970.

CAMBODIA AND LAOS

12. CIA estimates of enemy forces in South Vietnam include VC and NVA combat and Administrative Service personnel located in Cambodia (as well as more than 5,000 VC/NVA forces that were diverted from South Vietnam's Military Region 1 and 2 to Laos during the last half of 1970). At the time of Sihanouk's overthrow in March 1970, there were, in terms of headquarters subordination, an estimated 40,000-50,000 VC/NVA combat and administrative service personnel located in Cambodia. Because of the deployment of some 20 additional enemy units into Cambodia from their previous positions along the border, the number of VC/NVA forces currently located

[REDACTED]

in the country is believed to be 50,000-60,000 men, of which about 15,000 are combat forces targeted against Cambodia. VC/NVA control of the country is bounded by a line running roughly from Samrong-Siem Reap-Kompong Thom-Kompong Cham-Mimot with most of the units northeast of this line, although there are numerous pockets of other VC/NVA troops to the southwest, south and southeast of Phnom Penh. In addition to the VC and NVA forces, there are an estimated 5,000-10,000 Khmer Communists organized in regular and irregular combat units operating in Cambodia.

13. The estimates of Communist forces in Laos are much more tenuous than the estimates of enemy strengths in South Vietnam.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] our estimates of Communist strength remain point-in-time fixes and cannot be regarded as retroactive or used to make precise comparisons of the trends in enemy force levels.

14. Communist strength in Laos in November 1970 is estimated at approximately 127,000 men, of whom about 82,000 are North Vietnamese Army and about 45,000 are Pathet Lao (including some 2,000 Dissident Neutralists). These totals compare with a total force of 115,000 for May 1970, of which 67,000 were NVA and 48,000 were PL.

15. Of the total of 127,000 about 64,000 are estimated to be combat forces and 63,000 are command and support personnel (including engineer, medical, signal, and transportation). The 64,000 combat forces are composed of about 40,000 NVA and about 24,000 PL. Only about 45% of these combat forces are now deployed in north Laos, compared with nearly two-thirds last May. Included in the 64,000 figure are some 9,000 troops in antiaircraft, artillery and armor

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units, nearly 60% of which are deployed in south Laos. The higher percentage in the south results from the large number of antiaircraft personnel assigned to protect the routes and way stations of the Communist logistical and infiltration system. The 63,000 NVA and PL command and support troops cannot be as precisely located geographically

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[REDACTED] However, the 63,000 figure does include all logistical personnel (minus the antiaircraft personnel mentioned above) located in south Laos. The strength of these logistical personnel is currently estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000 men. Of this total, however, 5,000 to 10,000 are believed to be located physically in South Vietnam at any given time; they are carried in the Communist order of battle for South Vietnam and are not included in our total of 127,000 Communist troops in Laos.

Table 1

Estimates of Communist Forces in South Vietnam, by Function
1967-70

	<u>Dec 67</u>	<u>Dec 68</u>	<u>Dec 69</u>	<u>Dec 70</u>
Regular Combat Forces	<u>165-185^{a/}</u>	<u>170-190</u>	<u>130-150</u>	<u>110-125</u>
NVA	95-105	120-130	95-105	80-85
VC	70-80	50-60	35-45	30-40
Administrative Services	<u>75-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>70-90</u>
NVA	25-35	40-50	40-50	40-50
VC	50-65	40-50	40-50	40-50
Guerrillas	<u>100-125</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>60-80</u>	<u>50-70</u>
Total for RVN	<u>340-410</u>	<u>330-390</u>	<u>270-330</u>	<u>230-285^{b/}</u>

-
- a. During January 1968, prior to the beginning of the Tet Offensive, these forces were built up by some 30,000 men, primarily in Military Region I, from infiltration, recruitment and upgrading.
- b. As a result of Communist military developments in Indochina during 1970, some 55,000 to 65,000 VC/NVA regular combat and administrative personnel are now located in Cambodia and Laos (about 50,000 to 60,000 in Cambodia and more than 5,000 in Laos).

Table 2

Estimates of Communist Combat and Administrative Service Forces
in South Vietnam by Military Region a/
1967-70

(in thousands)

	<u>Dec 67</u>	<u>Dec 68</u>	<u>Dec 69</u>	<u>Dec 70</u>
<u>Military Region I</u> <u>b/</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>65</u>
Regular Combat Forces	65	75	55	40
Administrative Services	25	25	25	25
<u>Military Region II</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>40</u>
Regular Combat Forces	35	25	25	25
Administrative Services	15	15	15	15
<u>Military Region III</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>65</u>
Regular Combat Forces	45	55	40	35
Administrative Services	35	40	40	30
<u>Military Region IV</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>
Regular Combat Forces	30	25	20	20
Administrative Services	10	10	10	10
<u>RVN Total</u>	<u>260</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>200</u>
Regular Combat Forces <u>c/</u>	175 ^{d/}	180	140	120
Administrative Services <u>c/</u>	85	90	90	80

- a. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5,000.
The number of Guerrilla forces by military region is excluded from this tabulation because we estimate their strength only on a countrywide basis.
- b. Includes NVA forces located in the area between the DMZ and Dong Hoi, North Vietnam which militarily threaten RVN. These forces are estimated to have numbered approximately 20,000 men in December 1967 and 1968 and about 10,000 men in December 1969 and 1970.
- c. Totals represent generally the mid-point of the ranges shown in Table 1. These figures include those VC/NVA forces which deployed from South Vietnam to Cambodia and Laos during 1970. See Table 1, footnote b.
- d. During January 1968, prior to the beginning of the Tet Offensive, these forces were built up by some 30,000 men, primarily in Military I, from infiltration, recruitment and upgrading.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Attached are three copies of the
paper for the Attorney General.



13 Jan 1971
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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TRENDS IN VC/NVA STRENGTH IN 1970

1st Draft
 Later Revised
 by DIA.

DIA estimates that the the enemy military force structure within the RVN numbers 250,000-300,000 men.

Regular Combat Forces	130,000-150,000
Administrative Services	80,000-100,000
Guerrillas	40,000- 50,000
Total	250,000-300,000

CIA and DIA agreed with the estimates of regular combat and administrative service personnel; however, CIA estimated guerrilla forces to be 60,000-80,000. In addition to the above force structure the enemy's manpower includes 80,000-100,000 members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure, 50,000-80,000 Self-Defense personnel, and 10,000-20,000 Assault Youth.

During 1969 DIA and CIA estimate that the enemy force structure declined by 60,000-70,000, although 10,000 of this represented a decrease in the threat north of the DMZ and not losses to enemy units in the Republic of Vietnam. This decline was a function of several factors: increased pacification; Vietnamization; high enemy loss rates not being offset by gains from infiltration, recruitment, and other sources; and a probable decreased quality of enemy small unit leadership due to the heavy losses suffered in 1969. The decline played a contributory role in the shift of enemy strategy from one of large scale operations such as the Tet Offensive of 1968 to one of protracted war, which

was at first characterized by high points and then by occasional local surges in enemy activity.

During the first half of 1970 the enemy's force structure is estimated to have remained at the same general strength level (250,000-300,000). It is possible, however, that if a change in enemy forces has taken place, it has been too insignificant to be detected, or that sufficient data is not yet available.

Estimates of enemy strength are formulated through detailed analyses of a variety of orders of battle, use of special studies, examination of raw data in the

exchanges of viewpoints between concerned agencies and headquarters, and the use of analytical judgment. Knowledge about the enemy's immediate strength is hampered by the need to collect the raw data, to perform the analysis, to fill in gaps in intelligence, and to exchange views. Experience has shown that these factors restrict our ability to estimate strengths and trends until at least 3-6 months after they have occurred. Formulating estimates for 1970 have been further complicated by two factors. First, the Allied operations into Cambodia resulted in large amounts of data that necessitated a re-examination of previous estimates. The additions (or add on) made to

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these estimates have shown the softness of estimates in general and have caused us to question some of our traditional estimative techniques. Secondly, the early 1970 period was marked by very low levels of enemy activity, probably a result of his change to a protracted war strategy and the enemy's attempt to halt the strength decline of 1969. This low level resulted in a decrease in collected intelligence on enemy strength,

*meaning**desertion
recruiting*

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In light of these problems analysis of the trend in 1970 has rested on the interplay between various techniques utilized to estimate the enemy strength. Although limited by shortage of data, conventional unit by unit OB listings gave tenuous indications of only a nominal decline in strength. Consequently, in consultation with analysts it was generally determined that no significant change had occurred in enemy forces. This view was discussed and developed during the July conference, in which a captured document from the B-3 Front (Central Highlands area of GVN MR 2) indicated that VC/NVA unit strengths were numerically higher than previous analytical estimates. General analysis of several other documents by CIA also suggested that estimates of combat strengths throughout the Republic were biased downward.

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Initial updating of the CIA average battalion strength study based upon documents captured in Cambodia indicated that no significant change occurred in the average enemy maneuver strength.

CIA AVERAGE MANEUVER BATTALION STRENGTH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Average Strength</u>
Dec 1968	259
Mar 1969	239
Jun 1969	226
Sep 1969	240
Dec 1969	226
Mar 1970	219

The decline in early 1970 amounted to seven men per unit, but this may well be biased low. Experience with the methodology has shown that the battalion averages usually increase as the data base is expanded by further documentation. The subsequent changes vis-a-vis December 1969-March 1970 cannot be predicted or estimated, but it is feasible that with further documentation the seven man decline could be negated. At this time the study does suggest that if a change in strength did take place, it was probably insignificant. Since maneuver forces have probably the most volatile strength situation, it is highly likely that the other categories of the force structure have changed even less.

Loss-gains methodology, while admittedly soft, also suggested that the enemy had contained his losses to a level which enabled him to maintain his force structure through infiltration, recruitment, and other sources. In January, February and June of this year the enemy's loss rates were the lowest of any period since 1967. His slightly higher levels in March and April, and the high of May, were still lower than similar periods of 1968 and 1969. With the exception of April-May, this indicated an attempt to conserve strength in contrast to the high-activity high-loss periods of previous years. At this level the enemy's major losses were probably primarily from his irregular force structure (ie -- self-defense, assault youth and guerrillas). Given the softness of estimates of recruitment and the absence of data on the input of replacements into irregular forces, it is highly possible that in-country sources replaced a major portion of these losses. Because of the low level of activity, the exposure of regular combat and administrative service personnel was minimal, and it is conceivable that infiltration and a moderate amount of upgrading enabled these units to maintain their strength.

Recruit

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Integrating the three general approaches utilized to estimate enemy strengths -- order of battle unit listings, CIA's study of average battalion strengths, and analysis of the flow of VC/NVA manpower -- it was concluded that if there was a change in the enemy force structure, it was not significant. Further study and effort in this area will continue to add more precision to the estimates, but based on the information presently available the estimate appears correct.

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THE LOCAL FORCE SITUATION

The enemy's Local Forces and Guerrillas have been in severe decline in the RVN. First in the northern coastal provinces in 1966 and 1967 and later in GVN MR 3 and 4, the Local Forces native to the Republic were battered in battle and drastically reduced in strength. Guerrilla losses were also severe. A large part of the decline at each echelon can be partially attributed to the upgrading of personnel. Guerrillas have been upgraded in significant quantities to the Regular Forces. In turn district units have been taken in large numbers to form battalions - usually provincial - until after the 1968 General Offensive was well underway, when this kind of upgrading ceased. Viet Cong recruitment was reduced by the movement of the ARVN forces into the countryside, the reduced Viet Cong popular support, and increasing war pressures. By mid-1969, recruiting difficulties were serious, including even the densely populated delta, where the population was once controlled more by the Viet Cong than the Government of South Vietnam.

The case for the Local Force decline must be based on sparse intelligence scattered as to time, locale, and combat units involved; but these indicators do show a decrease in the size of different local force combat units over time. For example, in Binh Dinh Province documents have

provided a series of personnel strength fixes for 1965 through late 1969. There were 2,400 combat personnel in the Province Military Unit in June 1965; 2,000 in late 1966; 1,700 in late 1967; and 1,600 in March 1968. Between March 1968 and December 1969, the forces further dropped off to about 1,250. This steady decline occurred despite the activation of additional Local Force battalions in 1965 - 1967, a major local recruiting effort from the winter of 1967 through late 1968, and the introduction of North Vietnamese fillers in late 1967.

A second example is Tuy Phuoc District of the Province. There had been 175 combat and combat support personnel in the district, according to a document captured in January 1967. In March 1968 there were two local forces companies with 51 men and an additional 15 men in headquarters and specialized elements. In May 1968 one company consisted of upgraded guerrillas and guerrilla cadre. By December 1969 the district had only 11 combat and combat support personnel.

In addition to documenting the general decline in Local Forces, the Binh Dinh example illustrates a widespread phenomenon of utilizing scarce manpower to maintain strengths of battalions at the expense of smaller units, particularly district local forces and guerrillas. This has resulted from the enemy tailoring

his forces to meet the changing situation. Each echelon of his forces are tied to a particular administrative/geographic level. As the GVN presence rapidly expanded - particularly over the past 18 months - it became more and more difficult for hamlet, village, and district forces to maintain an overt physical presence in their home territory. As a result province commanders have tended to rely more on more flexible provincial level forces.

The Viet Cong military decline has also resulted in an increasing reliance on infiltrated North Vietnamese manpower. By late 1967 the Main Force VC regiments around Saigon and in the northern coastal provinces were termed "Viet Cong" only nominally. The bulk of their manpower and their replacements were North Vietnamese. By late 1967 North Vietnamese fillers are known to have also been introduced into Local Force battalions of the northern coastal provinces.

Since 1969 the use of North Vietnamese soldiers in Local Force battalions and the resubordination of largely NVA Main Force units to Local Forces has become more common. North Vietnamese manpower now comprises a significant proportion of the strength of Local Force battalions, except in the delta, though there are exceptions even there. Also in 1969 a few incidents appeared in which largely North Vietnamese units were resubordinated to the local forces.

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REGULAR AND IRREGULAR FORCE INTENTIONS

The local force situation has been characterized by the loss of local force strength to main forces until some period in 1969. Then there was a gradual return of some personnel to these forces through the use of NVA fill and the occasional transfer of Main Force units. Data is insufficient to determine whether there was or is a widespread enemy initiated effort to convert his main forces to local. The individual incidents in which units were resubordinated appear to be the result of the local military situation rather than an overall plan. In terms of the ratio of main force to local force strength the former is probably still favored; it seems apparent that the input of NVA fill to the local level has been needed to offset increasing losses and declining recruitment rather than to raise strength levels.

There are several indications that suggest the enemy should or will begin converting his strength from main to local forces. The number of enemy combat battalions apparently reached a plateau of approximately 350 units in mid 1969. This number has remained relatively stable through 1970, however, the average strength of battalions has declined. In the future continued attrition against local forces, combined with the decreasing strength of main forces, may force the enemy to shift

to local forces to lower his silhouette .

If infiltration and recruitment remain low, this need would be reflected in a decrease in the number of battalions combined with some resubordination.

Furthermore, building up local forces may be dictated by the enemy strategy of protracted war, his need to counter pacification and Vietnamization, and his consideration of attaining an advantageous ceasefire position. Protracted war enables him to maintain a force structure without heavy losses and commensurate need for replacements. However, his main force units--by virtue of their size, their more conventional combat role, and their dependency on a larger administrative support organization--are still more exposed to Allied combat capability. As Allied capability continues to increase, the maintenance of these VC/NVA forces may become too costly, thereby requiring resubordination or dissolution. Furthermore, advances in pacification and Vietnamization have made the enemy's local force and local control situation precarious, and have forced him to orient his units on countering these allied actions. To do so requires maintenance of the local force structure, and with low levels of infiltration and recruitment such maintenance may only be drawn from the main forces. Finally, in viewing a ceasefire and subsequent withdrawal, the residual strength of the enemy will rest with the low silhouette of his local forces, suggesting a need

to strengthen these forces.

In examining regular force support to guerrillas and the Viet Cong Infrastructure data is even more scarce than in the main force - local force situation. There is no evidence at present that the enemy is engaged in converting his regular forces to guerrillas or VCI, although tactically he does attempt to support the irregular force structure. Some input of NVA into guerrillas and VCI has undoubtedly occurred, but this appears to have been so small as to be undetectable. The same logic which applies to the possible future growth of local forces at the expense of main forces may apply to the reinforcement of guerrillas and VCI. However, the maintenance of irregular forces could be very difficult if allied success continues. The survivability of guerrilla and infrastructure personnel depends upon their indigenous nature, and the input of foreign personnel, possibly even South Vietnamese from another area of the country, may be virtually impossible in the face of a sophisticated intelligence collection and exploitation effort at the local level.

THE IMPACT OF THE CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS

The number of VC and NVA personnel astride the border and operating in Cambodia prior to the operations was estimated at the high end of a 50,000-60,000 range. Of this range, the number of forces actually operating in Cambodia is estimated on the high side of a 40,000-50,000 range. It is estimated that about 60 percent of these forces (25-30,000) are administrative service personnel and 40 percent (15-20,000) belong to combat units. Approximately two-thirds of the total strength of the Administrative Service force, consisting of roughly 20,000 personnel, are located in Cambodia opposite of GVN MR 3. The remaining 10,000 are attributed to the B-3 Front (GVN MR2) and organizations along the GVN MR 4 border. Approximately 50 percent of the Administrative Service personnel's effort is estimated to be applied toward the Communist solution of the Cambodian problem.

This widening of the Vietnam War into Cambodia has had a significant impact on the enemy main force capabilities over the near term. Communist forces have sustained large supply losses, extensive casualties, disruptions of their supply routes, dispersal of their forces and command and control apparatus and the loss of immunity they formerly enjoyed in sanctuaries and

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base areas astride the Republic of Vietnam (RVN)/Cambodian border. Nevertheless, the actions of enemy forces in recent weeks in establishing strong control over southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia suggest that the Communists' situation is by no means critical. Enemy efforts have been necessarily redirected from priority targets in the southern half of the Republic to restructuring and securing the channels of supply and infiltration into the RVN.

For the longer term, enemy forces retain significant capabilities -- both militarily and politically -- to continue their struggle. The Republic of Vietnam will remain Hanoi's top strategic objective in Indochina, and the Communists appear determined to maintain a credible military presence there. Communist leaders have been looking beyond the time when the bulk of US forces have been withdrawn and the balance of power is more evenly distributed between South Vietnamese and VC/NVA forces. Consistent with this outlook, the enemy has been following a low posture, prolonged warfare approach to the main war in the Republic, conserving assets in the expectation of exploiting political and military vulnerabilities when the US presence is further reduced. We do not believe that developments in Cambodia have critically damaged enemy capabilities to follow this strategy.

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The effects of the Cambodian operations will be felt most by Communist forces in GVN MR 3 and MR 4 and perhaps in the Central Highlands and southern GVN MR 2.

GVN MR 2

Enemy troops from the Central Highlands (B-3 Front) have engaged apparently in very little combat in Cambodia even though some units played a role in consolidating Northeast Cambodia. At the present time, elements of five NVA combat regiments of the B-3 Front -- 24th, 28th, 66th, 95th, and 40th -- as well as three independent combat battalions -- 20th Sapper, 37th Sapper, and 394th Artillery -- are located in Cambodia, near the border. During May and June, while Allied operations were conducted in their base areas, these combat units along with Administrative Service elements, withdrew from the border area deeper into Cambodia. Evidence now indicates that these formations have recently conducted resupply operations and are now returning to their normal base areas of operations. A recent rallier [] stated that NVA personnel were undergoing political training [] to prepare them for a future campaign in the RVN.

Hanoi maintains the option of utilizing these forces either in Cambodia or the Highlands depending on requirements and strategy.

GVN MR 3

The redeployment of military units from GVN MR 3 to Cambodia has significantly decreased the Vietnamese Communists' military threat to the Republic, especially in those areas adjacent to the Cambodian border. The bulk of these units are subordinate to the three divisions directly under the command of COSVN which have traditionally operated in the GVN MR 3 area (9th VC, 7th NVA, and 5th VC Divisions). The eight regiments under these divisions, in addition to one artillery regiment and several independent battalions, appear to be the major units from GVN MR 3 committed to the Communist operations in Cambodia. The redeployment of these units following the deployment of five regiments to GVN MR 4 last year has completely altered the strategic situation in the area.

Recently received information

indicates that as of March of this year the three divisions were preparing for a large-scale offensive to be conducted against major targets in GVN MR 3. the plans for the Republic were cancelled after the overthrow of Sihanouk and the units were then targeted against Cambodia for the purpose of restoring Sihanouk to power.

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The plan
was disrupted when ARVN and US cross-border operations
were begun, [redacted]

The remaining units not engaged in Cambodia are those regiments and battalions subordinate to the sub-regions surrounding Saigon, in Tay Ninh Province, and Military Region 7. The units subordinate to Sub-Region 2, however, traditionally have operated from the Cambodian border area and the information given by the high ranking officer [redacted] along with other information indicates that at least two battalions from the sub-region were detailed to operate against targets in Cambodia. Thus, it is apparent that the diversion of enemy units in Cambodia has greatly reduced the VC/NVA capability to launch any type of large military offensive in the GVN MR 3 area in the near future. It should be pointed out, however, that with the removal of US troops from [redacted] the Cambodian border, the VC/NVA forces that were forced out of their base area sanctuaries, could and in some cases are returning to prepare for activity within the Republic.

GVN MR 4

The five NVA regiments, which infiltrated into the delta from III Corps in the year after March 1969, have been the enemy's most potent combat units there. Viet Cong regiments and battalions were badly depleted by the heavier fighting of 1968, and with the exception of the units in Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa Provinces have not been significantly rebuilt and have progressively lost strength.

25X1

The movement of a portion of combat forces from the delta into Cambodia has eased pressure on pacification forces in both Chau Doc and Kien Giang Provinces. Nevertheless, there were setbacks in pacification in Chau Doc in April due to the NVA efforts there.

25X1

Effects of Cambodian Operations on Communist Capabilities

Supply Losses. Through 30 June, US and South Vietnamese forces captured about 9,200 tons of Communist supplies in Cambodia as follows:

FOOD (Class I)	<u>Tons</u> 7,100
Weapons and Equipment (Class II and Class IV)	300
Ammunition (Class V)	<u>7,800</u>
Total	9,200

These losses represent a substantial reduction of the stocks available in the Cambodian base areas. But the full impact of the losses cannot be measured precisely because we do not know the amount of supplies originally stockpiled there. Nor do we have any firm estimates of the amount of supplies stockpiled in southern Laos and the RVN. These stockpiles were undoubtedly large, but current Communist military operations indicate that supply losses to date have not resulted in any immediate large-scale degradation of Communist capabilities. On the other hand, the Communists are faced with a much more difficult problem in distributing their supplies to widely dispersed units in both Cambodia and the Republic who have been avoiding large unit contacts. It is probable that such difficulties will cause many enemy units to break down into smaller groups for a time and to forage for their needs as much as possible.

The impact of supply losses is probably greatest in the southern reaches of Cambodia and adjacent regions of the Republic. These areas are far removed from the exit points of the Laotian corridor and probably relied heavily on supplies which transited Sihanoukville. . . . Although there has been no appreciable decline in Communist military activity in these areas of the Republic, there are indications that at least some Communist units in the region are now under rigid orders to conserve ammunition.

The significance of Communist losses can best be put in perspective by comparing them with losses in the GVN during 1969 and the losses the Communists sustained last year in northern Laos during Vang Pao's operations on the Plain of Jars -- operations "About Face" -- and in the Xieng Khouang area:

	<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>Republic of Vietnam</u>	<u>Northern Laos</u>
Food	7,100	5,883	1,761
Weapons	300	450	640
Ammunition	1,800	1,638	2,563

The losses in the RVN, for example, had disruptive effects on specific planned operations but put no significant long-term restraint on Communist capabilities. In northern Laos, the Communist lost a much greater proportion of

their estimated ammunition stockpiles, but their operations were disrupted for only a few months.

Communist food losses, mainly rice, are the least significant even though they are equal to about a 10 month requirement for Communist forces in southern RVN (southern GVN MR 2, 3 and 4). Food losses can be replaced from South Vietnamese harvest or from the bumper January Cambodian crop. Communist forces in Cambodia now have greater access to rice producing areas, and the overall availability of rice is now greater than at the start of the operations. Thus, the Communists could provide rice for even greater numbers of troops in Cambodia. The continuation of ARVN ground and air operations in Cambodia will make it more difficult, however, to move rice within and from Cambodia. Consequently, some Communist units in the Republic's rice deficit areas will suffer temporary and localized shortages.

Communist weapons losses in Cambodia included more than 20,000 individual arms and 2,500 crewserved weapons. These losses would have been sufficient to equip 53 NVA battalions with individual arms and 38 NVA battalions with crew-served arms. Nevertheless, the total amount of weapons captured is believed to be insufficient to degrade seriously the enemy's combat capability in the longer term. Only 35 percent of the identified small arms, for example, are relatively new models of the

[redacted]

of the type currently used by the Communists. The remainder are older Communist and Free World types. A substantial portion of these losses may have been made up from Cambodian arms captured by the Communists. Moreover, if Hanoi regarded these weapons losses as serious, it can be expected that infiltrating personnel will begin carrying their own arms in the future. In 1968 and 1969 most infiltrators did not carry arms during their movement to the RVN, but were given weapons after arriving in base areas along the Cambodian/RVN border.

Ammunition losses, however, will be more serious. Reported losses of small arms ammunition, calculated at 1969 force levels and combat rates, are equivalent to 16 months requirements; losses of large rocket, mortar and recoilless rifle rounds are equivalent to 9 1/2 months of requirements. Even before the Allied move into Cambodia, many [redacted] periodic shortages of ammunition due to in-country supply movement difficulties. The capture of large quantities of ammunition and the forced dispersal of once ample border stockpiles will compound these continuing resupply difficulties inside the RVN, particularly in GVN MR 3 and 4. The Communist capture of relatively small Cambodian ammunition stocks will not alleviate Communist major resupply problems in the Republic, although they may prove useful in supporting small-unit operations in Cambodia.

[redacted]

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25X1

The Communists have also lost access to Sihanoukville (Kompong Sam) as a source of seaborne supplies for their forces, particularly for those in the southern portion of the RVN. The Sihanoukville route had served as a useful and convenient channel of supply for the Communists who will now be forced to fall back almost exclusively on the Laotian corridor for the movement of supplies. The network through Laos has a capacity greatly in excess of observed traffic requirements and during the past dry season handled a higher level of traffic than in any previous year. Moreover, some traffic flow is being maintained during the current rainy season. The Communists may also succeed in making an occasional sea shipment across Cambodian beaches, but these are not likely to be a major source of supply because of the blockade of the Cambodian and the RVN coasts.

Communist manpower losses as a result of operations in Cambodia are reported at about 11,000 killed and more than 2,200 captured or detained. Of the 11,000 KIA, about two-thirds are attributed to ARVN operations and the other third to US actions. If allowance is made for other types of losses -- died or disabled from wounds, missing in action, deserters, and the seriously ill -- Communist losses from all causes might appear to be on the order of 15,000. At present, there is no indication that Communist military forces have suffered

this level of losses. Part of the reason for the apparently higher number of losses reported is that many of the casualties were as a result of air and artillery attacks which makes it difficult to arrive at a precise body count; also civilian and non-combatant personnel have probably been included in the loss figure. Moreover, a sizable proportion of the reported casualties were inflicted and reported by ARVN forces without a chance for independent US verification.

25X1 [redacted] the reporting of enemy casualties incurred during the Cambodian operation has been seriously inflated by the inclusion of large numbers of non-combatants. Whatever the actual level of losses, and they still may be substantial, the scheduled arrival of known infiltrating groups should keep these forces essentially up to strength.

Hanoi can replace personnel losses -- if it desires -- simply by increasing the numbers of infiltrators from North Vietnam. The average time required to move a replacement group from the border of North Vietnam to the Fishhook area in Cambodia has been 90 days. Although a prolonged drain of manpower reserves would cause some strains over time, North Vietnam has ample manpower available. As a result, Communist manpower losses caused by the Allied actions in Cambodia are not likely to be a major problem.

Loss of Sanctuary and Base Areas. Perhaps more damaging to the Communists than the supplies lost in the Allied sweeps is the loss of sanctuary in Cambodia. Throughout the war, the Communists have enjoyed relative immunity in their Cambodian sanctuaries; their troops could escape the heat of battle in the RVN simply by retreating across the border. Through the use of Cambodian sanctuary, the Communists were able to limit their casualties, and to a large extent, to pick the time and place for much of their military activity in nearby areas of the Republic. Similarly, Cambodian sanctuary gave the Communists the luxury of being able to train and refit units without fear of having such activities disrupted. Now Allied air or ground attacks can force the Communists to devote more time and personnel to defensive measures.

The Allied move has also had other adverse consequences for the Communists. Many of the LOC's in eastern Cambodia have been disrupted, even if only temporarily. Most of the major Communist base areas have been overrun, and, with immunity no longer provided by the Cambodian border, the Communists will be forced to resort to wider dispersal of their supply caches. This will lead to some operational difficulties, particularly since the Communists normally prefer to preposition supplies before undertaking military action. Thus, it is likely that operations against frontier outposts in southern GVN MR 2 and

northern MR 3 will be more difficult to mount and sustain than in the past.

Command and Control Problems. The impact of the Allied move into Cambodia on the Communist command and control apparatus appears to have been minimal. The principal elements of COSVN escaped essentially intact, although most of them were forced to move, thereby temporarily reducing contacts with subordinate elements. But the key characteristic of the Communist command and control system is flexibility. For over a year, the Communists have been increasing the amount of discretionary tactical latitude permitted to individual commanders. Despite some temporary disruption and losses during the early weeks of the Cambodian campaign, the Communist command and control system was quickly restored to almost normal efficiency, and no lasting damage seems to have been inflicted on the apparatus.

LAOS

Allied incursions into Cambodia caused the Communists to move quickly to increase their logistics flexibility for supporting the war in both the RVN and Cambodia. Communist forces in the Lao Panhandle quickly captured Attapeu and Saravane and other points to consolidate and widen their control over LOC's and the major waterway systems flowing through this region into Cambodia. The North Vietnamese 559th Transportation Group continued its operations in the Lao Panhandle during

[REDACTED]

the current rainy season. In the past this unit had moved back to North Vietnam when the rains came.

Hanoi's action in not withdrawing logistic forces this year will put them in a better position to move large quantities of supplies earlier in the 1970-71 dry season than was the case last year when portions of the road system had to be restored. In view of the increased importance of Laotian supply routes and the Communists' concern about the possibility of ARVN or Allied sweeps into the Lao Panhandle to disrupt enemy supply and base areas, it is likely that additional North Vietnamese forces may be dispatched to southern Laos to reinforce the estimated 30,000 to 40,000 logistic troops now believed to be there. Indeed, recent infiltration traffic suggests that several battalion size units may now be enroute to this area, some of which may be intended to strengthen security in the area.

The net effect of recent events in the Lao Panhandle, then, has been a definite increase in the enemy's capability to move supplies and to maintain control over this vital corridor. In our judgment the Communists have the capability to move sufficient supplies through Laos to support combat and logistic operations at somewhat higher than current levels in Cambodia and the RVN in the next dry season. Initially, requirements can probably

[REDACTED]

be met from existing stockpiles in the Lao Panhandle. Nevertheless, the enemy will still face considerable difficulties from the increasingly effective air interdiction campaign, the depletion of stockpiles and the sheer distance -- some 500 to 600 miles -- of Communist forces in Cambodia and southern RVN from the Laotian corridor.

OUTLOOK:

As a result, Communist operations within the southern portion of the RVN may be somewhat reduced in the coming months. Nevertheless, the Communists have demonstrated since 1 July that they are capable of mounting low cost, selective actions such as low level, stand off fire attacks, sapper and small unit actions, and terrorist activities. In the GVN MR 1 and in most of GVN MR 2 however, the Communists clearly retain considerable military muscle which they may employ in an effort to both demonstrate Communist military power and to attempt to force the South Vietnamese to divert troops from areas where Communist forces may be encountering difficulties.

The critical element affecting Communist capabilities is time. The Communists clearly seem to fear the progress shown in the Vietnamization program. They know that the longer this program continues, the greater the likelihood that the GVN can develop the capability to hold its own in any confrontation with Communist

forces. Events in Cambodia have certainly exacerbated this concern, but the Communists probably perceive that they have also presented new opportunities to tie down South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia without excessive cost or risk and to divert Saigon's attention from the more important struggle in its own country. Hanoi's

25X1 [redacted] statements since the Cambodian incursions, however, clearly recognize that new difficulties will be encountered and increased demands will be necessary to support the struggle throughout Indochina. Yet there does not appear to be any diminution in Hanoi's pursuit of its long term aims of hegemony in this area. However, the weight of evidence indicates that the Communists will have the necessary capability to pursue their objectives.

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STUDY REQUIREMENTS

The attached charts contain the data requested in the study requirements. The charts are keyed to the respective categories of information requested. DIA's all-source OB retroadjusted estimates are attached as Part VI.

There are two sources of retrospective estimates of enemy strength. DIA/CIA have agreed to quarterly all-source retrospective estimates of regular combat and administrative service strengths for 1969-1970; each agency has also formulated individual guerrilla estimates for the same period. CICV (Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam) produces a detailed Order of Battle, which is based on collateral sources and provides data back through 1965.

The all-source retrospective estimates (Part VI) are considered to give the most accurate depiction of the magnitude and trend in the enemy's strength. However, these estimates cannot be broken into the various components requested in the study, nor do they date sufficiently back in time to fulfill study requirements for data in 1967 and 1968. The estimates were based upon a variety of orders of battle, independent studies, analytical judgments, and constant exchanges of views among the various commands and agencies concerned. Consequently, they represent a consensus of analytical judgments by the community.

CICV provides order of battle figures in sufficient detail to fulfill a percentage of the study requirements. Corps breakouts of maneuver, combat support and administrative service units and strengths could not be extracted because CICV only provides data on confirmed enemy units by Corps; its countrywide totals include both confirmed and probable/possible units. CICV also does not provide data in sufficient detail to meet any of the requirements of paragraphs IV and V. Because of these limitations, data could be provided only on a countrywide basis for paragraphs I, II and a portion of III.

Part IAVC/NVAManeuver Strength

(GVN) MR	1967	1968				1969				1970	
		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1											
2											
3											
4											
RVN	108.1	122.8	123.4	119.0	118.4	119.3	119.4	117.5	116.4	114.9	113.0

Maneuver strength includes NVA and VC forces (source: CICV Volume II, May 1970). VC company and platoon strength is included because no retroactive breakdown of these forces by maneuver and combat support is available, and the majority of these units are believed to be maneuver types. The strength for 2d quarter 1970 is the April 1970 CICV figure.

Part IB

VC/NVA

Combat Support Strength

(GVN) MR	1967	1968				1969				1970	
		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2
1											
2											
3											
4											
RVN	15.6	23.9	24.8	21.8	19.6	19.5	19.6	20.5	20.1	20.1	20.4

Combat support strength includes NVA and VC forces (source: CICV Volume II, May 1970). The strength for 2d quarter 1970 is the April 70 CICV figure.

PART IC

VC/NVA

Administrative Services

(GVN)

MR	1967	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1											
2											
3											
4											
RVN	47.9	52.3	52.4	54.8	57.0	60.3	58.1	56.8	57.0	56.1	56.3

Administrative Services include NVA and VC forces (Source: CICV Volume II, May 1970). The strength for 2d quarter 1970 is the April 1970 CICV Figure. (DIA's all-source estimate for 1969-70 is 80,000-100,000).

PART ID

Guerrilla Strength

(GVN) MR.	1967		1968				1969				1970	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	1st	2d
1	28.8	23.3	21.0	17.7	14.6	14.9	14.4	12.7	12.2	10.9	10.3	
2	33.8	18.3	13.8	12.1	11.3	13.4	11.6	10.7	10.4	9.8	9.7	
3	9.6	7.1	6.8	7.1	7.1	6.5	5.7	5.1	4.5	3.9	3.6	
4	30.0	24.4	22.8	23.0	23.8	25.0	22.6	20.5	18.9	17.5	16.8	
RVN	101.6	73.1	64.4	59.9	56.8	59.8	54.3	49.0	46.0	42.1	40.4	

Guerrilla strength is drawn from CICV Volume II, May 1970.

PART IE

(GVN) MR	<u>VCI</u>										
	1967	1968				1969				1970	
		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1	17.0 17.5	16.6	15.2	15.2	15.1	17.1	20.8	20.0	19.7	19.1	
2	18.9 19.6	17.3	17.6	18.0	17.9	17.2	15.5	13.3	13.3	12.0	
3	15.8 13.3	15.3	13.7	13.8	12.8	12.8	10.7	8.0	8.5	8.5	
4	33.0 33.1	34.8	3.5	33.9	32.9	32.8	34.3	32.6	33.7	30.6	
RVN	84.7 83.5	84.0	80.1	82.1	79.8	80.4	82.4	74.9	75.9	71.6	

VCI figures are drawn from CICV Volume II, May 70. Totals country wide from 2d quarter 1968 to present do not agree with Corps totals because country wide figures reflect approximately 1,100 unlocated COSVN personnel. Figures for 2d quarter 1970 represent CICV's April estimate. Averages for 1967 are based upon retro-figures for August-December of that year. (DIA's present estimate of VCI strength is 80,000-100,000).

PART II

VC/NVAManeuver StrengthsPercentageDistribution(NVA/VC)

(GVN.)

MR	1967				1968				1969				1970	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1					(not available)									
2					(not available)									
3					(not available)									
4					(not available)									
RVN	$\frac{47}{53}$	$\frac{55}{45}$	$\frac{56}{44}$	$\frac{53}{47}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{49}{51}$	$\frac{49}{51}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{55}{45}$	$\frac{53}{47}$	$\frac{53}{47}$	$\frac{53}{47}$	$\frac{53}{47}$	$\frac{53}{47}$

Percentage distributions are based on CICV Volume II, May 70. NVA percentages are probably higher than represented above; CICV includes NVA fill in VC strengths, and does not breakout fill by MR's or by maneuver and combat support units. Percentages for 2d quarter 1970 are based on CICV April figures.

PART II

VC/NVACombat Support StrengthsPercentage Distribution(NVA/VC)

(GVN) MR	1967		1968				1969		1970	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1			(not available)							
2			(not available)							
3			(not available)							
4			(not available)							
RVN	$\frac{74}{26}$	$\frac{82}{18}$	$\frac{81}{19}$	$\frac{77}{23}$	$\frac{77}{23}$	$\frac{74}{26}$	$\frac{80}{20}$	$\frac{79}{21}$	$\frac{78}{22}$	$\frac{78}{22}$ $\frac{79}{21}$

Percentage distributions are based on CICV Volume II, May 70. NVA percentages are probably higher than shown above, because CICV includes NVA fill in its VC strength. Furthermore, this fill cannot be broken down by MR's or by maneuver and combat support units. Percentages for 2d quarter 1970 are based on April CICV figures.

PART II

VC/NVA

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICESPERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

(GVN) MR	1967	1968				1969				1970	
		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2
1			(not available)								
2			(not available)								
3			(not available)								
4			(not available)								
RVN		$\frac{10}{90}$	$\frac{15}{85}$	$\frac{15}{85}$	$\frac{15}{85}$	$\frac{16}{84}$	$\frac{15}{85}$	$\frac{16}{84}$	$\frac{17}{83}$	$\frac{16}{84}$	$\frac{16}{84}$
DIA ALL SOURCE:						$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$

Percentages are based upon CICV Volume II, May 1970. Comparative all-source percentage distribution for available periods is provided for reference.

Percentages for 2d quarter 1970 are based on CICV's April estimate.

PART II

VC/NVA

Local Force Companies/PlatoonsPercentage DistributionNVA/VC

(GVN)

MR

1967

1968

1969

1970

1st

2d

3d

4th

1st

2d

3d

4th

1st 2d

1

2

3

4

RVN

NOTE: No retrospective figures are available for NVA participation in local force companies and platoons. Present estimates suggest that of the 20,000-25,000 personnel believed to be in these units, 3,000-4,000 are NVA (approximately 15 percent).

PART II

GUERRILLASPERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONNVA/VC

(GVN) MR	1967				1968				1969				1970	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1														
2														
3														
4														
RVN														

(NOTE: No figures are available for NVA participation in guerrilla forces).

PART III A

MANEUVER BATTALIONS

(NVA/VC)

(GVN)	1967	1968				1969				1970	
MR		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1					(not available)						
2					(not available)						
3					(not available)						
4					(not available)						
RVN	88 86	125 110	138 115	141 120	131 123	136 128	146 131	148 131	150 131	146 134	149 133

-- Battalion figures are based on CICV Volume II, May 1970; those for 2d quarter 1970 are CICV's April figures. Although no retroadjusted breakdown by Corps is available, DIA's present all-source holdings are listed below for information.

DIA ALL-SOURCEMANEUVER BATTALIONSNVA/VC

GVN MR 1	65 21
GVN MR 2	34 21
GVN MR 3	33 48
GVN MR 4	18 37
TOTAL	150 128

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- No retrospective breakdown by MF/LF is available.
- Average battalion strengths for each category (VC and NVA, MF and LF) are also unavailable. CIA's estimates of average maneuver battalion strength are provided below for information.

(GVN) MR	1967	1968				1969				1970
		1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st
1	459	361	361	291	306	237	282			
2	323	282	269	318	277	359	228			
3	371	295	275	239	244	236	215			
4	357	364	313	232	247	201	159			
RVN	373	321	294	273	259	239	226	240	226	219

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PART III B

COMBAT SUPPORT BATTALIONSNVA/VC

(GVN) MR	1967				1968				1969				1970	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d	3d	4th	1st	2d
1														
2														
3														
4														
RVN	$\frac{36}{11}$	$\frac{55}{12}$	$\frac{60}{14}$	$\frac{56}{16}$	$\frac{48}{17}$	$\frac{47}{18}$	$\frac{52}{18}$	$\frac{55}{17}$	$\frac{54}{17}$	$\frac{55}{17}$	$\frac{58}{17}$	$\frac{58}{17}$	$\frac{58}{17}$	$\frac{58}{17}$

-- Battalion figures are based on CICV Volume II, May 1970; those for 2d quarter 1970 are CICV's April figures. Although retroadjusted breakdowns by GVN MR's are not available, DIA's present all-source holdings are listed below for information.

DIA ALL-SOURCE--COMBAT SUPPORT BATTALIONSNVA/VC

GVN MR 1	$\frac{23}{3}$
GVN MR 2	$\frac{13}{0}$
GVN MR 3	$\frac{17}{12}$
GVN MR 4	$\frac{3}{4}$
TOTAL	$\frac{56}{19}$

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- Retrospective breakdown by MF/LF and average strengths are not available.

25X1

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PART IIIC

SEPARATE COMPANIESNVA/VC

No retrospective OB figures are available for separate companies (NVA and VC; MF and LF; by GVN MR's and country wide; average strength).

CICV's present holding appear below:

	<u>COMPANIES</u>	<u>MANEUVER</u>
GVN MR 1	3	49
GVN MR 2	1	98
GVN MR 3	1	60
GVN MR 4	8	99
	13	303

PART IV

DISPOSITIONS

(not available)

PART V

DOMINANT MODE OF EMPLOYMENT

(not available)

PART VI

25X1

ADJUSTED DIA ESTIMATES

RETRO-OB STRENGTHS

(IN THOUSANDS)

(* = CIA/DIA AGREED ESTIMATES)

	<u>DEC 68</u>	<u>MAR 69</u>	<u>JUN 69</u>	<u>SEP 69</u>	<u>DEC 69</u>	<u>MAR 70</u>
REGULAR COMBAT FORCES						
NVA						
UNITS	75- 80	75- 80	75- 80	70- 75	70- 75	70- 75
Fill in VC Units	25	25	20	20	20	20
Threat in NVN	20- 25	20- 25	10- 15	10- 15	10- 15	10- 15
Total	120-130	120-130	105-115	100-110	100-110	100-110
VC TOTAL	50- 60	50- 60	45- 55	40- 50	30- 40	30- 40
Total *	170-190	170-190	150-170	140-160	130-150	130-150
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES						
NVA *	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50
VC *	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50
Total *	80-100	80-100	80-100	80-100	80-100	80-100
GUERRILLAS (DIA EST)	60- 80	60- 80	60- 80	50- 70	40- 50	40- 50
TOTAL	310-370	310-370	290-350	270-330	250-300	250-300
CIA GUERRILLA EST	80-100	N/A	70- 90	70- 90	60- ^{25X1} ₈₀	60- 80

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
16 November 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA Estimates of Communist Forces and
Infiltration in Indochina

Communist Force Levels

A. South Vietnam

1. VC/NVA Regular Combat Forces: The strength of the enemy's regular combat forces at the end of 1967 is estimated to have totaled between 165,000 and 185,000 men. (See Table 1) Enemy forces underwent rapid and substantial augmentation during the weeks just prior to the 1968 Tet Offensive. We estimate that the combat forces reached a peak strength of about 195,000-215,000 toward the end of January 1968. Although the enemy suffered heavy casualties during 1968, particularly in the February, May and August offensives, high levels of infiltration, recruitment and upgrading enabled the Communists to maintain the aggregate strength of their regular combat forces at approximately their December 1967 level. By December 1968, these forces numbered an estimated 170,000 to 190,000 men. The December 1968 estimate and all subsequent estimates have been revised to reflect the increases in strength indicated by the new intelligence gathered by Allied Forces in Cambodia in mid-1970. We have not made a retroactive adjustment of our estimates of enemy forces prior to December 1968 because we lack information on the timing and rate at which the forces in Cambodia were built up. In any event, the adjustment of our estimates was only 10,000 for combat forces.

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2. During 1969 relatively low personnel inputs and comparatively high losses resulted in a decline in the enemy's combat forces and their strength at the end of 1969 is estimated at 130,000 to 150,000 men. This is some 40,000 less than our estimate of 170,000 to 190,000 for the end of 1968. However, only 30,000 of this decline in force levels represents actual losses; the remaining 10,000 reflects the northward deployment of NVA forces out of the threat area between the DMZ and Dong Hoi, North Vietnam.

3. The strength of VC/NVA combat forces has unquestionably continued to decline during 1970. However, it is not yet possible to determine the extent of this erosion. For such an assessment of combat force trends we require a large amount of detailed order of battle information.

however, points clearly to a continued erosion of unit strengths. In addition, there have occurred a number of reorganizations including the disbanding of regimental and battalion commands, which reflect severe localized manpower problems as well as the change in enemy strategy.

4. From experience we know that a loss/gain methodology cannot be used to compute changes in enemy strength. However, the wide gap between inputs from recruiting and infiltration, and losses strongly supports the view that VC/NVA combat forces have continued to decline during 1970.

5. During 1969, when the MACV estimate of VC/NVA losses from all causes was about 290,000 and our estimate of infiltration was about 100,000-120,000, we estimated with reasonable confidence that the VC/NVA combat forces were eroded by about 30,000. (The 30,000 erosion estimated for 1969 is based on two mutually supporting methodologies that are independent of judgments concerning overall manpower losses and gains.)

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During 1970, VC/NVA losses will be on the order of 200,000 (assuming that the level of combat for the year remains at the average level indicated thus far) and infiltration arrivals will total about 60,000.

6. If the same relationship holds this year as last year, the VC/NVA combat forces might decline by the end of 1970 by some 20,000-25,000 men. This would place these forces at about 110,000-125,000 by the end of December 1970, before the 1970/1971 dry season infiltration flow begins to arrive. To be valid, this kind of calculation requires a number of crucial assumptions: 1.) that the relationship between the losses estimates and actual losses is constant for the two time periods; 2.) that the mix of losses among the enemy force echelons (combat forces, Administrative Services, Guerrillas, VCI, and laborers) is relatively constant over the period; and 3.) that our estimate of a constant level of recruiting in South Vietnam - 36,000 in each year - is correct. In addition, such an estimate relies on the accuracy of the infiltration estimates, but we have a high degree of confidence in them.

7. Administrative Services: A number of factors complicate any measurement of the trends in the strength of the VC/NVA Administrative Services. These factors include the following:

(a) Allied field efforts have been focused largely on the collection of information on regular combat forces because of the greater military threat they represent; and

(b) The US Intelligence Community did not concern itself with the size of the enemy's Administrative Services until early 1967. As a result, changes in estimates of the personnel in the Administrative Services from one period to another often reflect better collection and analysis of data rather than real increases or decreases in the number of units or personnel. Thus, there is no retroactive series which accurately depicts trends in the strength of Administrative Services. The softness of these estimates is reflected in the relatively broad ranges assigned to them.

8. Guerrillas: Since the end of 1967 there has been both a qualitative and quantitative decline in the VC Guerrilla force in South Vietnam. The strength of the Guerrilla force in December 1967 is estimated at 100,000-125,000 men and reflects the heavy recruitment and upgrading begun in the last half of the year in preparation for the 1968 Tet Offensive. As a result of heavy losses suffered during the Tet, May and August offensives and the upgrading of Guerrillas to meet the increased manpower demands by the regular combat forces, the Guerrilla force experienced an overall quantitative and qualitative decline. Subsequent recruitment was not sufficient to offset the total attrition of Guerrilla units or to compensate for the loss of the experienced cadre who were upgraded to the regular combat forces. By the end of December 1968, Guerrilla strength had dropped to between 80,000 and 100,000 men. The Guerrilla force continued to be eroded in 1969 and by March 1970 had decreased to 60,000-80,000 men. This downward trend probably will continue throughout the remainder of 1970, although at a lesser rate because of the re-emphasis of guerrilla warfare.

B. Cambodia

9. CIA estimates of enemy forces in South Vietnam include VC and NVA combat and Administrative Service personnel located in Cambodia. At the time of Sihanouk's overthrow in March 1970, there were an estimated 50,000-60,000 VC/NVA forces operating astride the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border. In terms of headquarters subordination, the number of these forces actually located in Cambodia were estimated at the low end of a 40,000-50,000 range. This force level probably has not changed significantly since that time despite the casualties the enemy has suffered because of infiltration and the deployment of some 20 additional enemy battalions into Cambodia from their previous positions along the border. However, the actual number currently is believed to be at the high end of the 40,000-50,000 range. In addition to these VC and NVA forces, there are an estimated 10,000 Khmer Communists organized in regular and irregular combat units. This is some 2 to 3 times the number of armed Communist insurgents estimated for the pre-March 18th period. Thus, total Communist forces located in Cambodia and representing a potential threat to the viability of the Cambodian Government currently number on the order of 60,000 men. Table 2 presents a detailed

breakdown of this 60,000 man force by function. Regular combat forces are estimated at about 25,000 men, Administrative Service personnel at about 30,000 and indigenous Guerrilla forces at about 5,000. Because of the difficulty of determining the roles of many of the VC/NVA units located in Cambodia we have continued to maintain a combined estimate of enemy forces in SVN and Cambodia. Enemy maneuver battalions in Cambodia fall logically into three categories. First, there are those that are actively employed against Cambodia either in a combat role or on proselyting/population and resources control missions. Secondly, there are the combat forces performing a security function for the command and logistics organizations. Thirdly, as before, a number of combat units are located in Cambodia for tactical convenience that are nonetheless targeted against SVN. In August, DIA/CIA estimated that about 38 of the 84 battalions then located in Cambodia seemed to be actively employed against Cambodia in one role or another. The deployment of enemy forces has changed somewhat since then and there appear to be a few more units in this category at the present time.

C. Laos

10. To date, there are no systematized [] order of battle estimates for Laos. As a result, the Intelligence Community generally has accepted the Vientiane Station's [] "Monthly OB Summary" as the basic order of battle document for Laos with some adjustments made to consider [] intelligence. However, these [] estimates, even with [] adjustments, remain point-in-time fixes and cannot be regarded as retroactive estimates or used to make meaningful comparisons of the trends in enemy force levels. These shortcomings in order of battle estimates for Laos reflect the fact that we lack sufficient ground coverage in a number of areas of Laos and [] data available on Communist activity in Laos is very limited. These gaps in intelligence preclude any reliable retroactive adjustment of the enemy's force structure and strength. The Intelligence Community's first attempt to develop [] estimate of enemy strength was in October 1969. This estimate which was updated in May 1970, is the latest [] estimate of the Washington Intelligence Community.

11. The strength of Communist forces in Laos in May 1970 is estimated at about 115,000 of which about

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67,000 were NVA and 48,000 were Pathet Lao (including PL and dissident neutralists). As shown in Table 3, about 59,000 troops -- 32,000 NVA and 27,000 PL -- are estimated to be combat forces, including about 8,000 men in anti-aircraft (AAA) units. The remaining 56,000 NVA and PL forces are command and support personnel (e.g., engineer, medical, signal and transportation). These forces include personnel of the 559th Transportation Group (minus the AAA personnel mentioned above) located in Laos. Although the strength of the 559th has previously been estimated at 30,000 to 40,000 men, recent infiltration of logistical personnel to south Laos suggest that the actual number now is probably at the high end of, or slightly above this range. Of this total, however, 5,000 to 10,000 are believed to be located in South Vietnam or just along the South Vietnamese-Laotian border and are carried in the Communist order of battle listings for Administrative Services for South Vietnam; thus, they are not included in the total of 115,000 Communist troops in Laos.

12. Since May 1970, there have been some significant changes in the NVA's force structure in Laos. In North Laos, at least two regimental equivalents of the 312th NVA Division and some smaller elements of the 316th NVA Division have returned to North Vietnam. The exact reason for this shift at this time is unclear and seems unusual, since the beginning of the dry season is normally a time when the NVA build up their forces and start their offensive campaign. These units may possibly be used to fill the void created by the several NVA combat regiments which currently are deploying southward in North Vietnam and appear destined for South Laos. In the Laos Panhandle, the enemy has significantly strengthened his combat and logistical personnel, probably reflecting the increased priority the Communists have placed on this area. Since May it is believed that more than 7,000 NVA troops in combat units have already deployed to south Laos from both South Vietnam as well as North Vietnam. In addition to the infiltration of regular combat units, more than 11,000 personnel (most of whom are believed to be logistical) have departed North Vietnam for south Laos since January. Most of these persons, however, have been identified since May. Although their specific functions are unclear, they may be involved in the probable expansion into Cambodia [redacted] in the western part of south Laos. The net effect of all these deployments in north and south Laos

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initially appears to have increased slightly enemy strengths compared with the May 1970 estimate. This will certainly be true if the several NVA regiments currently deploying southward in North Vietnam are in fact, destined for south Laos. In addition, these deployments in Laos also appear to significantly change the geographic structure of the enemy's forces in increasing the relative share of his total combat force in south Laos.

Infiltration in Indochina

A. South Vietnam

13. Infiltration data on arrivals by destination is by far the most reliable and complete for South Vietnam.

[REDACTED] During the last two years, annual arrivals have fallen off significantly from the 1968 high and this year they appear to be less than 60 percent of what they were in 1969. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The difference between arrivals and departures [REDACTED] is due primarily to required travel times and casualties suffered enroute by infiltrators. Standard travel times vary from 30 days for the DMZ area to 120 days for the COSVN area. Attrition along the pipeline customarily has been estimated at a constant 15% of the departure strength. On the basis of recent data providing evidence that this attrition rate may be too high, we are reconsidering the question of attrition.

[REDACTED]

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B. Laos

15. We have no time series for infiltration into Laos (north or south) such as we have for South Vietnam. Normally substantial forces from both areas have redeployed to North Vietnam for part of the rainy season and returned to Laos for dry season campaigning. As a result of these cyclical deployments changes in personnel strength, personnel rotation and augmentation have been largely hidden from us.

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In addition to this 11,000, there are approximately 7,000-10,000 additional regular NVA combat personnel which have either arrived in south Laos or are currently moving southward in North Vietnam and appear destined for south Laos. In addition, there are some 5,000 personnel assigned to units which were recently deployed from South Vietnam into south Laos.

C. Cambodia

17. We have almost no knowledge of the infiltration procedures of groups destined for Cambodia.

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The problem is complicated by the fact that many of the B-3 Front and COSVN pipeline terminals (dispensing points) as well as units are located in Cambodia.

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It is also possible that some troops destined for south Laos will be utilized in Cambodia.

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Table I
VC/NVA Forces In South Vietnam
(In Thousands)

	31 Dec 67	31 Dec 68	30 Jun 69	31 Dec 69	31 Mar 70
Regular					
Combat Forces	<u>165-185</u>	<u>170-190</u>	<u>150-170</u>	<u>130-150</u>	<u>130-150</u>
NVA	<u>95-105</u>	<u>120-130</u>	<u>105-115</u>	<u>95-105</u>	<u>95-105</u>
VC	70-80	50-60	45-55	35-45	35-45
Administrative					
Services	<u>75-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>80-100</u>
NVA	<u>25-35</u>	<u>40-50</u>	<u>40-50</u>	<u>40-50</u>	<u>40-50</u>
VC	50-65	40-50	40-50	40-50	40-50
Guerrillas	<u>100-125</u>	<u>80-100</u>	<u>70-90</u>	<u>60-80</u>	<u>60-80</u>
TOTAL	340-410	330-390	300-360	270-330	270-330

Table 2

Communist Forces in Cambodia

(In Thousands)

	<u>30 June 1970</u>
Regular Combat Forces	<u>25</u>
NVA*	15
VC*	5
Khmer Communists	5
Administrative Services*	<u>30</u>
NVA	15
VC	15
Guerrillas (indigenous)	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>60</u></u>

*These forces are included in the estimate of VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam presented in Table 1.

Table 3

Pathet Lao/NVA Forces in Laos

(In Thousands)

	<u>May 1970</u>
Regular Combat Forces	<u>59</u>
NVA	32
PL (including Dissident Neutralists)	27
Command and Support Personnel	<u>56</u>
NVA	35
PL	21
TOTAL	<u><u>115</u></u>

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Infiltration Arrivals in South Vietnam
by Destination, 1967-70^{a/}
(in Thousands)

	<u>DMZ</u>	<u>TTH</u>	<u>MR-5</u>	<u>B-3</u>	<u>COSVN</u>	<u>Total</u>
1967						
4th Qtr	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	<u>20.7</u>
1968						
Total		147.0 ^{b/}		25.0	78.0	<u>250.0^{c/}</u>
1969						
1st Qtr	.6	10.8	7.7	3.1	4.9	27.1
2nd Qtr	.2	3.7	14.1	5.4	31.8	55.2
3rd Qtr	1.2	2.0	1.9	1.4	8.4	14.9
4th Qtr	.0	1.5	2.3	.1	2.9	6.8
Total	2.0	18.0	26.0	10.0	48.0	<u>104.0^{d/}</u>
1970						
1st Qtr	1.5	1.4	2.6	.6	7.6	13.7
2nd Qtr	.5	.3	7.0	3.6	16.8	28.2
3rd Qtr	.6	1.6	2.9	.5	4.1	9.7
4th Qtr ^{e/}	.0	1.7	.9	.7	.0	3.3
Total	2.6	5.0	13.4	5.4	28.5	<u>54.9^{f/}</u>
Grand Total						429.6

- a. Figures in Table are ICG figures with some CIA/DIA adjustments to keep them current. Infiltration arrival data by destination are not available prior to 1968.
- b. Data not further broken down in the northern area.
- c. Because the methodology used by the ICG is necessarily somewhat conservative, both for 1968 and subsequent years, CIA estimates the total annual infiltration during 1968 at 250,000-300,000 men. The ICG estimate of 250,000 has subsequently been revised downward to currently 241,700 men.
- d. CIA estimates the total annual infiltration during 1969 at 100,000-120,000 men. The ICG estimate of 104,000 has subsequently been revised downward to currently 99,700 men.
- e. Preliminary data based on expected arrivals.
- f. CIA estimates the total annual infiltration during 1970 will probably be on the order of 60,000 men.

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Table 5

Infiltration
Departures from North Vietnam
for South Vietnam, 1967-70

(in Thousands)

1967	
4th Qtr (Nov and Dec) ^{a/}	<u>20.0</u>
1968	
1st Qtr	72.5
2nd Qtr	95.2
3rd Qtr	35.0
4th Qtr	<u>38.0</u>
TOTAL	240.7
1969	
1st Qtr	61.9
2nd Qtr	4.1
3rd Qtr	1.3
4th Qtr	<u>18.1</u>
TOTAL	85.4
1970	
1st Qtr	36.0
2nd Qtr	6.8
3rd Qtr	6.3
4th (1 Oct through 16 Nov)	<u>20.9</u>
TOTAL	70.0
GRAND TOTAL	<u><u>416.1</u></u>

a. Data on infiltration departures are not available
prior to November 1967.

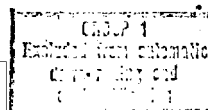
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Enemy Force Levels in SEAsia CountriesStrength figures in 000'sRetroactivity Center Adjusted Estimated Strengths

	31Dec67	30June68	31Dec68	30June69	31Dec69	30June70	Project 31Dec
<u>Cambodia*</u>							
Combat Forces							
NVA							
Indigenous Communists							5
VC							
Administrative Services							
NVA							
Indigenous Communists							
VC							
Guerrilla							5
<u>TOTAL</u>							
<u>Laos **</u>							
Combat Forces					59	59	
NVA					32	32	
Indigenous Communists					27	27	
Administrative Services					56	56	
NVA					35	35	
Indigenous Communists					21	21	
Guerrilla					0	0	
<u>TOTAL</u>					115	115	
<u>SVN ***</u>							
Combat Forces	165-185	170-190	170-190	150-170	130-150	120-140	
NVA	95-105	120-130	120-130	105-115	95-105	90-100	
Indigenous Communists	70- 80	50- 60	50- 60	45- 55	35- 45	30- 40	
Administrative Services	75-100	60- 80	80-100	80-100	80-100	80-100	
NVA	25- 35	20- 30	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	
Indigenous Communists	50- 65	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	40- 50	
Guerrilla	100-125	80-125	80-100	70- 90	60- 80	60- 80	
<u>TOTAL</u>	340-410	310-395	330-390	300-360	270-330	260-330	

See Footnotes on Following Page.



FOOTNOTES FOR TABLE 1.

* Except for the indigenous Communists in Cambodia CIA estimates of VC/NVA forces in Cambodia are included in the estimates for South Vietnam. CIA has no retroactive series for enemy forces in Cambodia. See Text.

** These data are agreed Community estimates for October 1969 and May 1970, respectively. They are point in time estimates and should not be used to indicate trends. The category of Administrative Services is normally carried as Command and Support Personnel and does not entirely equate with Administrative Services forces in South Vietnam or Cambodia.

*** The estimate for 31 Dec 67 and June 1968 are not retroactively adjusted to include OB information picked up in Cambodia this last summer.

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8 June 1970

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Comments on DIA's Estimates of Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam for 1 June 1970

1. Attached is a copy of the agreed CIA/DIA estimate for 31 December 1969 which indicates a total enemy strength of 220,000 to 290,000 men. Of this total strength, 105,000 to 125,000 were estimated to be NVA and 115,000 to 165,000 were VC.

2. As a result of intelligence information gathered during the recent Allied operation in Cambodia, OER/I/SV now believes that our end-of-year estimate was too low, particularly for Administrative Service personnel. Preliminary analysis suggests that the December 1969 estimate may have understated the enemy's strength by as much as 20,000 men in just the B-3 Front, COSVN, and Military Region 3 areas alone. The bulk of these persons are believed to be NVA. To our knowledge, DIA has not yet made a similar analysis. Their estimates, including the 1 June figures, are not believed to reflect this new information. Thus, in our view, their estimates would be conservative, both in terms of the total as well as the number of NVA troops.

3. Although CIA does not generally make Corps estimates, the proportion of enemy forces in II, III, and possibly even IV Corps,

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particularly for Administrative Service personnel, would be higher than indicated in the DIA table because of the new units identified as operating in the areas.

CIA/OER/I/SV

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CIA/DIA Estimate, 31 December 1969

The following is a preliminary CIA/DIA estimate of enemy military strength in and directly threatening South Vietnam as of 31 December 1969. A comparison of this estimate with enemy force levels of a year earlier (31 December 1968) shows a decline of 60,000 - 70,000 men during 1969. However, this decrease includes a shifting of about 10,000 men north of the DMZ out of the threat area. Therefore, the actual net attrition of the enemy's in country strength was about 50,000 - 60,000 men.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ^{2/}	85,000 - 95,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>

Total	120,000 - 140,000
-------	-------------------

Administrative Service^{3/}

NVA	20,000 - 30,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>

Total	55,000 - 75,000
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Guerrillas	<u>45,000 - 75,000</u>
------------	------------------------

Total	220,000 - 290,000
-------	-------------------

1. Enemy troops in the area between Dong Hoi and the DMZ are included in the threat category.

2. NVA combat forces include 10,000 - 15,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and approximately 20,000 NVA in VC units.

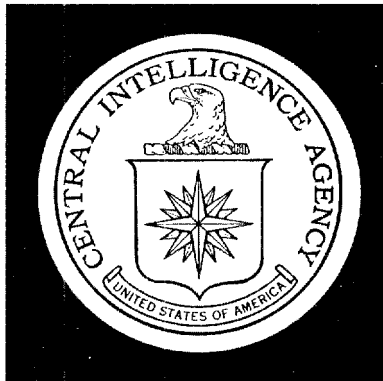
3. Administrative Services include 5,000 - 10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

TABLE IDIA ESTIMATE AS OF 1 JUNE 1970

	NVA/VC IN SVN				
	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
NVA	47,000	15,000	24,000	8,000	94,000
VC/MF	1,000	3,000	7,000	6,000	17,000
VC/LE	4,000	7,000	4,000	7,000	22,000
GUERRILLA	11,000	10,000	4,000	17,000	42,000
ADMIN SERVICES NVA	14,000	5,000	4,000	1,000	24,000
VC	<u>6,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>23,000</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>46,000</u>
TOTAL	83,000	46,000	66,000	50,000	245,000
WITHDRAWN NVA FORCES	<u>-61,000</u>	<u>-20,000</u>	<u>-28,000</u>	<u>-9,000</u>	<u>-118,000</u>
TOTAL VC FORCES LEFT	22,000	26,000	38,000	41,000	127,000

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Communist Forces in Laos

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15 May 1970

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15 May 1970

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Communist Forces in Laos

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GROUP I
Excluded from automatic
Downgrading and
Declassification

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15 May 1970

MEMORANDUM^{*}

SUBJECT: Communist Forces in Laos

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We believe there has been no fundamental change in the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao force structure or troop strength in Laos since the deployment of the 312th NVA Division to Laos last fall. (As pointed out in the last paragraph of this paper, the numerical strength of Chinese Communist forces in North Laos associated with road construction activity has about doubled since last October.) [redacted] indicate the deployment of several new units, equating roughly to at least the strength of a regiment, into northern Laos in early 1970. On the other hand, Communist forces have suffered losses, particularly in north Laos. We believe these factors about balance each other out, and that except for Chinese forces, present Communist strength in Laos is approximately the same as it was in October 1969.

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* This memorandum was prepared jointly by CIA, DIA, State [redacted]

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2. Because we lack ground coverage in some areas of Laos and because the amount of [] data available on Communist activity in Laos is limited, our estimates of Communist strengths must perforce include educated guesses []

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[] The Communist command structure, force strengths, trends, and the threats in north and south Laos are discussed at greater length in the sections following the Table.

TABLE

ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF NVA AND PL FORCES IN LAOS*

NVA Forces (including NVA and mixed PL/NVA units)

Combat	32,000
Command and Support	<u>35,000</u>
Subtotal	67,000

PL Forces (including about 2,300 Dissident Neutralists)

Combat	27,000
Command and Support	<u>21,000</u>
Subtotal	48,000

GRAND TOTAL	115,000**
-------------	-----------

* Abbreviations: NVA: North Vietnamese Army; PL: Pathet Lao; DN: Dissident Neutralist.

** This total contains some margin of error. The actual figure could range from 100,000 to 120,000.

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II. COMMUNIST FORCES

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B. Communist Strength

8. Communist strength in Laos is presently estimated at approximately 115,000 men, of which about 67,000 are North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and about 48,000 are Pathet Lao (PL) and Dissident Neutralists.* About 59,000 troops -- 32,000 NVA and 27,000 PL -- are estimated to be combat, of which approximately two-thirds are deployed in north Laos and about one-third in south Laos. Included in these forces, there are 8,000 or more troops in artillery, armor, and anti-aircraft (AAA) units, slightly more than half of which are deployed in south Laos. The higher percentage in the south results from the large number of AAA personnel of the 559th Transportation Group which are required to protect its routes and way stations. The 56,000 NVA and PL command and support (e.g., engineer, medical, signal, transportation) troops cannot be as precisely distributed geographically

in Laos. However,

the 56,000 figure does include those personnel of the 559th

* Because of their relatively small number (i.e., about 2,300 men), the strength of the dissident neutralists is combined with the strength of the PL forces in this memorandum.

Transportation Group (minus the AAA personnel mentioned above) which are located in south Laos. Although the strength of the 559th previously has been estimated at between 25,000 to 40,000 men, current assessment by analysts both in Washington and the field now indicate that the actual strength is closer to the high end of the range or approximately 40,000.* Of this total, however, 5,000 to 10,000 are believed to be located physically in South Vietnam at any given time; they are carried in the Communist order of battle for South Vietnam and are not included in our total of 115,000 Communist troops in Laos.

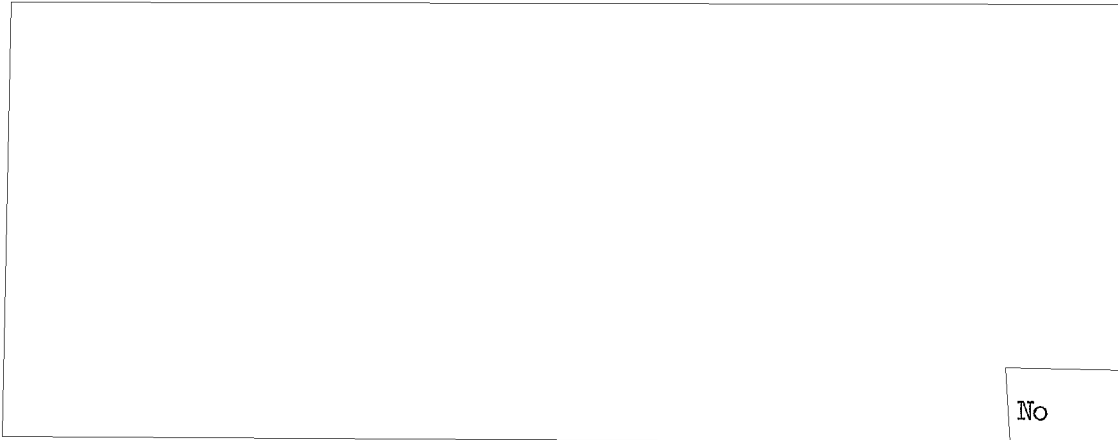
C. Recent Changes in the Force Structure

9. There has been no fundamental change in the Communist force structure since the arrival of the 312th NVA Division in Laos last fall.

* This change does not mean that there has been any change in the strength of the 559th, but rather a refinement of a previous estimate. However, the approximately 40,000 is an estimate of maximum dry season strength. During the rainy season, when logistical activities are curtailed, large numbers of 559th personnel have normally redeployed to North Vietnam.

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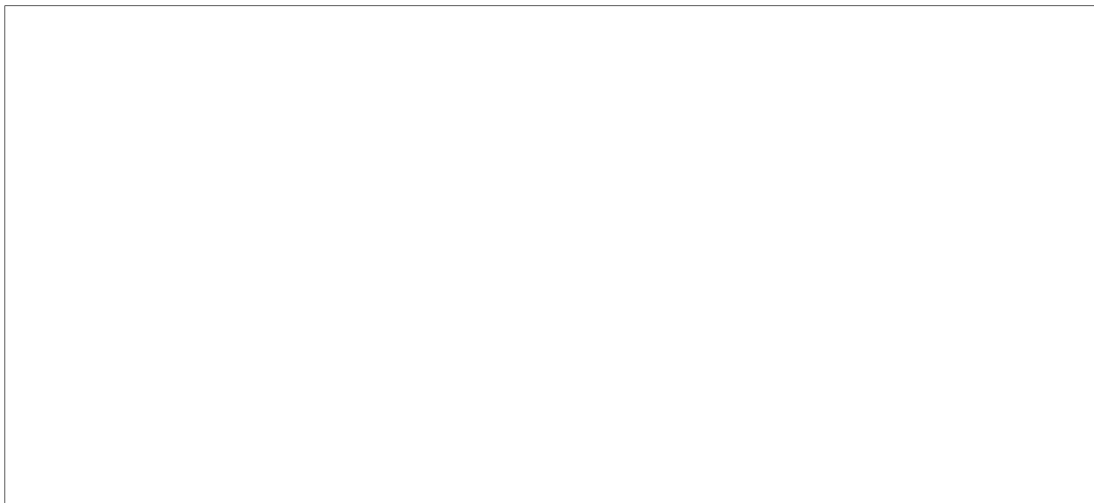
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No

units are known to have redeployed from Laos to North Vietnam since last October.

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D. Trends in Strength

11. Communist strength is directly influenced by losses from all causes and by gains from infiltration and recruitment. Because of a lack of good evidence on the extent of Communist

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attrition during Vang Pao's rainy season offensive last year, we were not certain that the movement of the 312th Division into Laos in October 1969 represented a large net gain in Communist strength. Also, the successful Communist offensive this year in the area of the Plain of Jars has been achieved at a considerable price in terms of Communist casualties, although Communist losses from ground and particularly air attacks cannot be reliably quantified.

12. The most important source of Communist replacements is from the infiltration of personnel from North Vietnam. However, we have never had the type of reliable information on NVA replacement infiltration into Laos that exists for South Vietnam. Although occasionally some infiltration groups are detected, we do not have enough evidence to make a reliable estimate of the rate of infiltration of NVA troops into Laos.

13. Pathet Lao forces depend on in-country recruiting for their replacements. In north Laos, at least, manpower available to them has declined considerably since Vang Pao's withdrawal from the Plain of Jars. At that time large elements of the population also drew back to more secure areas under RLG control.

Because of this and earlier movements of the population out of PL-controlled areas we believe that there has been no increase in PL forces in recent years.

14. Although we cannot make a precise estimate it appears that unit and filler infiltration from North Vietnam may have offset heavy Communist casualties. Therefore, on balance, we believe that the Communist forces in Laos, including the NVA forces which have borne the brunt of the recent fighting in the Plain of Jars, probably have been able to maintain their strength at approximately the level estimated for October 1969.

III. THE COMMUNIST MILITARY THREAT

A. Qualitative Factors

15. NVA forces in Laos are roughly comparable in equipment and effectiveness to NVA forces in South Vietnam. They now bear the major brunt of Communist-initiated combat operations. The PL are used primarily to hold and administer an area, once taken, and in a sense their role is "pacification." The combat effectiveness of the mixed PL/NVA units varies according to the size and role of the NVA complement. On the other hand the Dissident Neutralists are virtually of no significance as a combat threat. They appear to be maintained primarily for political purposes, as they are intended to provide a military facade for the Communists' claim that the political arm of the Dissident Neutralists are the "true neutralists" and should replace Souvanna's neutralists in any reconstitution of the coalition government along tripartite lines.

16. The 312th NVA Division, although relatively new to Laos, has displayed an increasing ability to handle the combat and tactical situations in the northeastern part of the country and is now considered about equal in combat effectiveness and capabilities to the 316th Division. Although the manpower situation in both divisions still appears to be adequate, both units probably have taken significant losses from recent ground and air actions.

B. The Threat to Vang Pao in North Laos

17. Current Deployment of Communist Forces. As of early May 1970, 18 NVA infantry battalions of the 148th and 174th Regiments of the 316th Division, and the 141st and 165th Regiments of the 312th Division, the battalions of the Xieng Khouang Tactical Front, and the 766th Independent Regiment were deployed in the general Plain of Jars area. The total strength of these battalions together with their regimental support is estimated to be on the order of 9,000 troops. In addition to these troops the Communists are estimated to have about 5,000 to 6,000 NVA support troops deployed in the area between Long Tieng and the North Vietnamese border.

18. There are also about 29 battalions of mixed PL/NVA, PL, and DN troops in Xieng Khouang Province. However, these forces have played almost no role in the fighting in the Plain of Jars area. They appear to have been used for local security and support in rear areas. Total Communist forces (NVA, PL, and DN) in Xieng Khouang Province presently are estimated to be on the order of 20,000 men.

19. Strategic Position. Traditionally, NVA units have entered Laos and built up during the months from September to December. Probing has increased during January and early February;

by mid-February the Communists' dry season offensive has been in full swing and usually reached its peak by early March. After March, there has historically been a lull in the fighting and units have been regrouped and resupplied. Except for last year (1969) when Communist forces continued their military offensive through June, they have traditionally ceased major military activity with the onset of the Lao rainy season, relinquished forward positions under pressure, and withdrawn most NVA forces into rear base areas in Laos and North Vietnam.

20. During the last rainy season NVA forces suffered considerable personnel and supply losses from air strikes and from Vang Pao's forces. The current offensive may have slowed because of the Communists' need to replenish their supply stocks before pushing significantly beyond the Plain of Jars. The NVA has been forced to use a considerable number of their own combat troops to move their supplies this year because of the Royal Lao Government's wholesale evacuation of the civilian populace from the Plain prior to the Communist offensive in early February. Current indications suggest that the Communists may have committed possibly as many as 25 percent of the infantry troops of the 312th and 316th divisions to securing lines of communications and to logistical functions such as the portering of supplies. Present Communist logistics efforts indicate an interest in

[redacted]

maintaining pressures on Vang Pao; it is not clear, however, whether the Communists intend another offensive before the rainy season begins or whether they intend merely to maintain and consolidate their present positions.

C. The Situation in South Laos

21. Current Position of Communist Combat Forces. There has been an increase in Communist military activity in South Laos, most particularly with the fall of Attapeu in April 1970 and recent attacks on the eastern rim of the Bolovens Plateau. In general, we do not know as much about the current location and strength of Communist combat forces in South Laos as in North Laos [redacted]

[redacted] What evidence we have indicates that Communist troops there are spread out. There are presently some 16 battalions (5 of them NVA) which pose a threat to the town of Saravane and RIG positions on the Bolovens Plateau.

22. There has been little ground reporting on Communist units moving into northern Cambodia, although two battalions of the 66th NVA Regiment may have moved into Stung Treng Province in Cambodia in early April. If the Communists wish to reinforce their troops in Cambodia from existing units in South Laos they could maintain their lines of communication and pressure on

friendly forces in southern Laos, and still send 5 to 10 NVA battalions into Cambodia.

23. Current Position of Communist Support Forces. Like the NVA forces in north Laos, the 559th Transportation Group's activity also normally slows down considerably during the rainy season, and is usually accompanied by an exfiltration of personnel from Laos to North Vietnam. During the 1969 rainy season, it is estimated that on the order of one-half of 559th personnel redeployed and there was no attempt to maintain through vehicular traffic. By November, however, these forces had returned to their area of operation in South Laos.

24. The timing of the activity cycle in 1970 however, has been thrown off by the recent activities in Cambodia. A significant amount of supplies have been captured by Allied troops currently attacking Viet Cong and NVA base areas along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border and Communist supply lines from Phnom Penh and the Gulf of Thailand have been interdicted.

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D. The Reinforcement Threat from North Vietnam

26. Hanoi might at some future time feel it desirable to strengthen its forces in Laos substantially. If the Communists were to add a division or two, they might, as in the case of the 312th, draw on divisions with training or defense missions located in the Red River Delta, e.g. the 330th or 350th Divisions. Based on the 312th's performance, advance elements of such divisions could be inside Laos within several weeks of receiving movement orders, although placing a full division into combat would probably take about two months. If speed or combat experience were especially important, Hanoi might consider using one or more of several divisions located further south, e.g. the 320th in Thanh Hoa, the 325th now in the Ha Tinh-Nghe An border area, or the 308th near Hanoi. Elements of all three of these divisions have had combat experience against allied forces and all are believed to be close to TO&E divisional strength (12,500).

E. Chinese Communist Forces in Laos

27. The Chinese Communists have continued the gradual expansion of their military presence in northern Laos.

Chinese Communist forces in Laos also include a AAA

element larger than division size which has been growing steadily and presently includes at least 3,500 troops. In addition there are various security and support units. Moreover, there are two Chinese Communist air surveillance radar stations in northwest Laos. Based on this new information, the current estimate of Chinese Communist forces in north Laos is 10,000-14,000,* about double our estimate of October 1969.

* These forces are not included our total of 115,000 NVA and PL forces in Laos.

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FROM:			
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WHICH MAY BE USED.

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STAT

VC/NVA Forces in South Vietnam, 31 December 1969

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Regular Combat Forces

NVA ^{2/}	85,000 - 95,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>
Total	120,000 - 140,000

Administrative Service^{3/}

NVA	20,000 - 30,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>
Total	55,000 - 75,000

Guerrillas

	<u>45,000 - 75,000</u>
Total	220,000 - 290,000 ^{4/}

1. Enemy troops in the area between Dong Hoi and the DMZ are included in the threat category.

2. NVA combat forces include 10,000 - 15,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and approximately 20,000 NVA in VC units.

3. Administrative Services include 5,000 - 10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

4. This total includes an estimated 40,000 VC and NVA combat and administrative service forces currently located in or operating in and out of Cambodia on a regular basis, some 20,000 to 30,000 would actually be located in Cambodia at any one time.

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CIA/DIA Estimate of Enemy Order of Battle, 31 December 1969

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12 April 1970

Table 9

CIA and MACV Estimates
of VC Recruitment

	<u>In Thousands</u>	
	<u>CIA</u>	<u>MACV</u>
1967	<u>90.0</u>	<u>42.0</u>
1968	<u>132.0</u>	<u>60.5</u>
First Quarter	45.0	21.0
Second Quarter	32.0	17.0
Third Quarter	27.0	9.0
Fourth Quarter	27.0	13.5
1969	<u>45.0</u>	<u>57.3</u>
First Quarter	13.0	20.8
Second Quarter	12.0	14.6
Third Quarter	10.0	11.9
Fourth Quarter	10.0	10.0
1970		
First Quarter	10.0	-

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Table 8

Estimates of VC/NVA Manpower Inputs,
Quarterly Totals

	<u>Total Input</u>	<u>VC Recruitment</u> ^{b/}	<u>NVA Infiltration</u>
1967	<u>191,600</u>	<u>90,000</u>	<u>101,600</u>
1968	<u>378,300</u>	<u>132,000</u>	<u>246,300^{a/}</u>
First Quarter	117,900	45,000	72,900
Second Quarter	116,800	33,000	83,800
Third Quarter	93,800	27,000	66,800
Fourth Quarter	49,800	27,000	22,800
1969	<u>149,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>	<u>104,000^{a/}</u>
First Quarter	43,200	13,000	30,200
Second Quarter	14,900	12,000	52,900
Third Quarter	25,800	10,000	15,800
Fourth Quarter	15,100	10,000	5,100
1970			
First Quarter	22,000	10,000	12,000

a. These figures are ICG estimates. Because the methodology used is necessarily somewhat conservative, CIA estimates total annual infiltration at 250,000 - 300,000 in 1968 and 100,000 to 120,000 in 1969.

b/ CIA estimates.

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Third Quarter	93,800	27,000	66,800
Fourth Quarter	49,800	27,000	22,800
1969	<u>149,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>	<u>104,000^{a/}</u>
First Quarter	43,200	13,000	30,200
Second Quarter	14,900	12,000	52,900
Third Quarter	25,800	10,000	15,800
Fourth Quarter	15,100	10,000	5,100
1970			
First Quarter	22,000	10,000	12,000

a. These figures are ICG estimates. Because the methodology used is necessarily somewhat conservative, CIA estimates total annual infiltration at 250,000 - 300,000 in 1968 and 100,000 to 120,000 in 1969.

b/ CIA estimate.

Table 8

Estimates of VC/NVA Manpower Inputs,
Quarterly Totals

	<u>Total Input</u>	<u>VC Recruitment</u> ^{b/}	<u>NVA Infiltration</u>
1967	<u>191,600</u>	<u>90,000</u>	<u>101,600</u>
1968	<u>378,300</u>	<u>132,000</u>	<u>246,300</u> ^{a/}
First Quarter	117,900	45,000	72,900
Second Quarter	116,800	33,000	83,800
Third Quarter	93,800	27,000	66,800
Fourth Quarter	49,800	27,000	22,800
1969	<u>149,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>	<u>104,000</u> ^{a/}
First Quarter	43,200	13,000	30,200
Second Quarter	14,900	12,000	52,900
Third Quarter	25,800	10,000	15,800
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Summation of Enemy Forces

North Vietnam

Army	515,000 ^{a/}
Air Force	10,000
Navy	3,000
Armed Public Security Forces	16,500
Regional Forces	16,000
Total	560,000

Laos

Pathet Lao	48,000
NVA	67,000
Total	115,000

South Vietnam

Regular Forces	120-140,000
Administrative Services	55- 75,000
Guerrillas	45- 75,000
Total	220-290,000 ^{b/}

- a. Includes forces in Laos and South Vietnam.
b. Includes forces in Cambodia base areas.

CIA/OER
4 May 70

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CIA/OER
4 May 70

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CIA/OER
4 May 70



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NORTH VIETNAM
Order of Battle

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<u>Total Armed Forces</u>	<u>560,500</u>
Army <u>a/</u>	515,000
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a/ Includes NVA forces in Laos and South Vietnam.

Manpower Pool

The manpower pool comprises an estimated 750,000 physically fit males in the age group 17 - 35 who are not now in the military services. An additional 190,000 males reach the age of 17 each year and an estimated 120,000 of these would be physically fit.

CIA/OER
4 May 1970

4 May 1970

MEMORANDUM

Strength and Deployment of NVA Forces
in North Vietnam, Laos, and South Vietnam

1. There were an estimated 375,000 military and security personnel stationed within North Vietnam at the end of 1969. The size of these forces has remained relatively constant over the past two years. Major ground combat units in North Vietnam include elements of 7 infantry divisions, 1 infantry brigade, and 1 artillery division. A breakdown of the Armed Forces by type of service is shown below:

	<u>December 1969</u>
Army	330,000
Navy	3,000
Air Force	10,000
Armed Public Security Forces	16,000
Regional Forces	16,000
Total	<u>375,000*</u>

* An additional 15,000 personnel stationed within the geographical boundaries of North Vietnam are considered as part of the direct military threat to Allied Forces in South Vietnam and hence are carried in the enemy order of battle for South Vietnam.

SECRET

2. Enemy forces in Laos in October 1969 totaled 115,000, of which about 67,000 were NVA (including advisors and filler personnel) and about 48,000 Pathet Lao (including dissident neutralists). A breakout of these forces between North and South Laos is shown in the table below:

	<u>NVA</u>	<u>Pathet Lao^{a/}</u>	<u>Total</u>
North Laos	23,900	23,100 ^{b/}	47,000
South Laos	21,200	12,400	33,600
Command/ Support ^{c/}	18,000	16,400	34,400
	<u>63,100</u>	<u>51,900</u>	<u>115,000</u>

a. Figures for the Pathet Lao forces include an estimated 3,500 NVA advisors and fillers in North and South Laos, giving a total NVA force of 67,000 men.

b. This figure includes an estimated 3,000 dissident neutralists.

c. To date, no reliable methodology has been developed to allocate command and support by geographic area. However, a large but unknown portion of the total figure are subordinate to elements of the 559th Transportation Group, whose primary function is to provide logistical support for the war in South Vietnam.

3. The Communist force levels in Laos have been increasing for the past several years. The Pathet Lao more than doubled the size of their own forces after 1962 but in recent years there has been little or no increase in their strength, due, in part at least, to the movement of the population out of PL-controlled areas. The buildup of NVA forces, on the other hand, has continued and they now outnumber Pathet Lao forces. Although part of the growth of NVA strength is due to the expansion of the 559th Transportation Group in South Laos, there has also been an increase in NVA combat forces in both North and South Laos over the

past several years. Since the last half of 1969, NVA forces have increased by 10,000-12,000 as a result of the deployment of a full division and support elements into North Laos for the recent dry season campaign.

4. Despite the infiltration of an estimated 350,000-420,000 NVA personnel into South Vietnam during 1968 and 1969, the number of NVA personnel operating in the South is estimated to have declined by about 15,000 during the same period. Of the total combat and support elements (Main and Local Forces and Administrative Services) in South Vietnam, NVA personnel accounted for about 50 percent at the end of 1967. By the end of 1969, the percentage of NVA personnel equaled about 60 percent of these forces. A breakdown of these forces is shown below:

	In Thousands	
	<u>Dec 67</u>	<u>Dec 69</u>
Main and Local Forces		
NVA	95-105	85-95
VC	70-80	35-45
Subtotal	<u>165-185</u>	<u>120-140</u>
Administrative Services		
NVA	25-35	20-30
VC	50-65	35-45
Subtotal	<u>75-100</u>	<u>55-75</u> ✓
TOTAL	<u>240-285</u>	<u>175-215</u> ✓
Of which NVA	120-140	105-125

VC/NVA Forces in South Vietnam, 31 December 1969

The following is a preliminary CIA/DIA estimate of enemy military strength in and directly threatening South Vietnam as of 31 December 1969. A comparison of this estimate with enemy force levels of a year earlier (31 December 1968) shows a decline of 60,000 - 70,000 men during 1969. However, this decrease includes a shifting of about 10,000 men north of the DMZ out of the threat area^{1/}. Therefore, the actual net attrition of the enemy's in country strength was about 50,000 - 60,000 men.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ^{2/}	85,000 - 95,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>
Total	120,000 - 140,000

Administrative Service^{3/}

NVA	20,000 - 30,000
VC	<u>35,000 - 45,000</u>
Total	55,000 - 75,000

Guerrillas	<u>45,000 - 75,000</u>
------------	------------------------

Total	220,000 - 290,000 ^{4/}
-------	---------------------------------

1. Enemy troops in the area between Dong Hoi and the DMZ are included in the threat category.

2. NVA combat forces include 10,000 - 15,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and approximately 20,000 NVA in VC units.

3. Administrative Services include 5,000 - 10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

4. This total includes an estimated 40,000 VC and NVA combat and administrative service forces currently located in or operating in and out of Cambodia on a regular basis, some 20,000 to 30,000 would actually be located in Cambodia at any one time.

29 April 1970

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: CIA/DIA Agreed Estimate on the Number and Disposition of VC/NVA Forces Located In and Operating In and Out of Cambodia as of April 1970

CIA/DIA estimates of enemy forces in South Vietnam include VC and NVA combat and administrative service forces located in or operating in and out of Cambodia. Given the various uses of Cambodian territory by these forces, we estimate, in terms of headquarters subordination, that the strength of these forces number approximately 40,000 troops. (This figure excludes those NVA troops infiltrating into South Vietnam.) Of these 40,000 troops, however, only 20,000 to 30,000 are estimated to be actually located in Cambodia at any one time. About 60 percent of the troops are regular combat forces and 40 percent are administrative service personnel. With the recent increase in military operations in the eastern provinces, the number of troops currently in Cambodia will vary but is estimated at the high end of the 20,000 to 30,000 range. These forces are estimated to be dispersed along the Cambodia/South Vietnamese border as shown below. They could range from a low consistent with 20,000 to a high consistent with the 40,000 estimate. For reasons stated above, it is unlikely that these numbers would approach the high end of the following ranges:

Tri border	2,000- 5,000
II Corps and Northern III Corps (through Base Area 350)	5,000-10,000
Remainder of III Corps	11,000-21,000
IV Corps	2,000- 4,000
Total	<u>20,000-40,000</u>

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Table 10
VC/NVA Military Losses
Quarterly Totals

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Killed in Action</u>	<u>Died of/ Disabled by Wounds</u>	<u>Prisoner of War</u>	<u>Chieu Hoi^a</u>	<u>Other Losses</u>
1967	<u>182,016</u>	<u>88,104</u>	<u>30,835</u>	<u>8,254</u>	<u>14,823</u>	<u>40,000</u>
1968	<u>309,885</u>	<u>181,149</u>	<u>63,402</u>	<u>12,765</u>	<u>12,569</u>	<u>40,000</u>
First Quarter	113,969	72,455	25,359	4,177	1,978	10,000
Second Quarter	78,831	46,620	16,317	3,748	2,146	10,000
Third Quarter	62,814	34,674	12,136	2,942	3,062	10,000
Fourth Quarter	54,271	27,400	9,590	1,898	5,383	10,000
1969	<u>288,256</u>	<u>156,923</u>	<u>54,924</u>	<u>8,004</u>	<u>28,405</u>	<u>40,000</u>
First Quarter	79,926	44,816	15,686	2,913	6,511	10,000
Second Quarter	85,546	48,807	17,083	2,423	7,233	10,000
Third Quarter	62,571	32,979	11,543	668	7,381	10,000
Fourth Quarter	60,213	30,321	10,612	2,000	7,280	10,000
1970						
First Quarter	<u>53,755</u>	<u>28,337</u>	<u>9,918</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
a. Military ralliers only.						

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CIA Estimates of VC Recruitment

1967	<u>90,000</u>
1968	<u>132,000</u>
First Quarter	45,000
Second Quarter	33,000
Third Quarter	27,000
Fourth Quarter	27,000
1969	<u>45,000</u>
First Quarter	13,000
Second Quarter	12,000
Third Quarter	10,000
Fourth Quarter	10,000
1970	
First Quarter	10,000

CIA/OER
4 May 70



NORTH VIETNAMOrder of Battle1 January 1970

<u>Total Armed Forces</u>	<u>560,500</u>
Army <u>a/</u>	515,000
Air Force	10,000
Navy	3,000
Armed Public Security Forces	16,500
Regional Forces	16,000

a/ Includes NVA forces in Laos and South Vietnam.

Manpower Pool

The manpower pool comprises an estimated 750,000 physically fit males in the age group 17 - 35 who are not now in the military services. An additional 190,000 males reach the age of 17 each year and an estimated 120,000 of these would be physically fit.

CIA/OER
4 May 1970

NORTH VIETNAM

Order of Battle

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CIA/OER
4 May 1970

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NORTH VIETNAM
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CIA/OER
4 May 1970

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CIA/OER
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CIA/OER
4 May 1970

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4 May 1970

MEMORANDUM

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in North Vietnam, Laos, and South Vietnam

1. There were an estimated 375,000 military and security personnel stationed within North Vietnam at the end of 1969. The size of these forces has remained relatively constant over the past two years. Major ground combat units in North Vietnam include elements of 7 infantry divisions, 1 infantry brigade, and 1 artillery division. A breakdown of the Armed Forces by type of service is shown below:

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2. Enemy forces in Laos in October 1969 totaled 115,000, of which about 67,000 were NVA (including advisors and filler personnel) and about 48,000 Pathet Lao (including dissident neutralists). A breakout of these forces between North and South Laos is shown in the table below:

	<u>NVA</u>	<u>Pathet Lao^{a/}</u>	<u>Total</u>
North Laos	23,900	23,100 ^{b/}	47,000
South Laos	21,200	12,400	33,600
Command/ Support ^{c/}	18,000	16,400	34,400
	<u>63,100</u>	<u>51,900</u>	<u>115,000</u>

a. Figures for the Pathet Lao forces include an estimated 3,500 NVA advisors and fillers in North and South Laos, giving a total NVA force of 67,000 men.

b. This figure includes an estimated 3,000 dissident neutralists.

c. To date, no reliable methodology has been developed to allocate command and support by geographic area. However, a large but unknown portion of the total figure are subordinate to elements of the 559th Transportation Group, whose primary function is to provide logistical support for the war in South Vietnam.

3. The Communist force levels in Laos have been increasing for the past several years. The Pathet Lao more than doubled the size of their own forces after 1962 but in recent years there has been little or no increase in their strength, due, in part at least, to the movement of the population out of PL-controlled areas. The buildup of NVA forces, on the other hand, has continued and they now outnumber Pathet Lao forces. Although part of the growth of NVA strength is due to the expansion of the 559th Transportation Group in South Laos, there has also been an increase in NVA combat forces in both North and South Laos over the

past several years. Since the last half of 1969, NVA forces have increased by 10,000-12,000 as a result of the deployment of a full division and support elements into North Laos for the recent dry season campaign.

4. Despite the infiltration of an estimated 350,000-420,000 NVA personnel into South Vietnam during 1968 and 1969, the number of NVA personnel operating in the South is estimated to have declined by about 15,000 during the same period. Of the total combat and support elements (Main and Local Forces and Administrative Services) in South Vietnam, NVA personnel accounted for about 50 percent at the end of 1967. By the end of 1969, the percentage of NVA personnel equaled about 60 percent of these forces. A breakdown of these forces is shown below:

	In Thousands	
	<u>Dec 67</u>	<u>Dec 69</u>
Main and Local Forces		
NVA	95-105	85-95
VC	70-80	35-45
Subtotal	<u>165-185</u>	<u>120-140</u>
Administrative Services		
NVA	25-35	20-30
VC	50-65	35-45
Subtotal	<u>75-100</u>	<u>55-75</u> ✓
TOTAL	<u>240-285</u>	<u>175-215</u> ✓
Of which NVA	120-140	105-125

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Handwritten signature/initials inside a circle

12 March 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

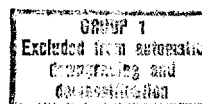
SUBJECT : CIA/DIA Agreed Enemy Strength
Estimates

1. As you know, CIA and DIA have reached agreement on estimates of enemy strength as of end-December 1968 and then quarterly through September 1969. We are currently being asked to join with DIA in making an agreed estimate for end-December 1969. I have, to date, refused to join in such an estimate because the data required to make one in which we can have high confidence are simply not available. My counterparts at DIA agree with my judgment, but nevertheless will probably be compelled to make the estimate because of a request from General McChristian. Lacking an adequate data base, they will be forced to use the so-called gain/loss methodology (a net balancing of inputs such as infiltration and recruitment against losses). This methodology is notoriously unreliable and frequently misleading.

2. Last week we briefed General Cushman on the pitfalls of the gain/loss methodology and the reasons we are unable to make more current estimates. At that time he indicated that he would contact General Bennett and ask him to talk to General McChristian about the problems the community has in coming up with current estimates of enemy strength.

3. In view of General McChristian's latest request, you might want to suggest to General Cushman that if he has not already talked to General Bennett this might be a good time to do so. Such a conversation could not only allay any possible feeling on General Bennett's part that CIA is being uncooperative, but would also provide him with community support in refusing to provide estimates that are not substantiated by hard data. If there should arise an overriding

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need for a current estimate at the highest levels of Government, we would, of course, cooperate fully with DIA, regardless of the data problem.



Deputy Director
Economic Research

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Memorandum for Record

The following estimates have been agreed to by CIA, or have been coordinated in so far as possible to insure minimum potential disagreement

Enclosure 1: DIA/CIA Estimate, 31 December 1968

Enclosure 2: DIA/CIA Estimate, 31 March 1969

Enclosure 3: DIA/CIA Estimate, 30 June 1969

Enclosure 4: DIA/CIA Estimate, 30 September 1969

Enclosure 5: DIA Estimate, 31 December 1969 with
CIA footnote.

Enclosure 6: DIA/CIA Estimate of the decline in
Enemy Strength 1969

Enclosure 7: DIA Estimate of Enemy forces in Border
Nations, 1969

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DIA/CIA Estimate, 31 December 1968

The following is the DIA/CIA estimate of enemy strength in and threatening the Republic of Vietnam as of 31 December 1968.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ¹	115,000-125,000
VC	<u>45,000- 55,000</u>
Total	160,000-180,000

Administrative Service²

NVA	20,000- 30,000
VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>
Total	60,000- 80,000

Guerrillas	<u>60,000-100,000</u>
Total	280,000-360,000

¹NVA combat forces includes 20,000-25,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and 20,000-25,000 NVA in VC units.

²Administrative Services includes 5,000-10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

Enclosure1

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DIA/CIA Estimate, 31 March 1969

The following is the DIA/CIA estimate of enemy strength in and threatening the Republic of Vietnam as of 31 March 1969.

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VC	<u>45,000- 55,000</u>
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VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>
Total	60,000- 80,000

Guerrillas	<u>60,000- 90,000</u>
Total	280,000-350,000

¹NVA combat forces includes 20,000-25,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and 20,000-25,000 NVA in VC units.

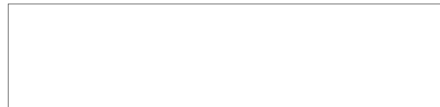
²Administrative Services includes 5,000-10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

Enclosure 2



25X1

25X1



DIA/CIA Estimate, 30 June 1969

The following is the DIA/CIA estimate of enemy strength in and threatening the Republic of Vietnam as of 30 June 1969.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ¹	100,000-110,000
VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>
Total	140,000-160,000

Administrative Service²

NVA	20,000- 30,000
VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>
Total	60,000- 80,000

Guerrillas	<u>60,000- 90,000</u>
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Total	260,000- 300,000 ←
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¹NVA combat forces includes 10,000-20,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and 20,000-25,000 NVA in VC units.

²Administrative Services includes 5,000-10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

Enclosure 3



25X1

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DIA/CIA Estimate, 30 September 1969

The following is the DIA/CIA estimate of enemy strength in and threatening the Republic of Vietnam as of 30 June 1969.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ¹	90,000-100,000
VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>

Total	130,000-150,000
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Administrative Service²

NVA	20,000- 30,000
VC	<u>40,000- 50,000</u>

Total	60,000- 80,000
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Guerrillas	<u>50,000- 80,000</u>
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Total	240,000-310,000
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¹NVA combat forces includes 10,000-15,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and approx 20,000 NVA in VC units.

²Administrative Services includes 5,000-10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

Enclosure 4

25X1

25X1

DIA Estimate, 31 December 1969

1. The following is the DIA estimate of enemy strength in and threatening the Republic of Vietnam as of 31 December 1969.

Regular Combat Forces

NVA ¹	85,000- 95,000
VC	<u>35,000- 45,000</u>

Total	120,000-140,000
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Administrative Service²

NVA	20,000- 30,000
VC	<u>35,000- 45,000</u>

Total	55,000- 75,000
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Guerrillas	<u>45,000- 75,000</u>
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Total	220,000-290,000
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2. This preliminary estimate is subject to adjustment as more intelligence become available.

3. CIA does not believe there is sufficient data available to made an end-of-year estimate. However, CIA agrees with DIA that enemy strength continued to decline in the fourth quarter of 1969.

¹NVA combat forces includes 10,000-15,000 personnel in units in NVN and considered to pose a threat, and approximately 20,000 NVA in VC units.

²Administrative Services includes 5,000-10,000 members of the 559th Transportation Group.

Enclosure 5

25X1

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DIA/CIA Estimate of
the Decline in Enemy
Strength in 1969

1. DIA/CIA estimates that the enemy's strength declined by approximately 50,000 men in 1969.
2. DIA COMMENT: Comparison of the DIA estimate for December 1969 (Enclosure 5) with the DIA/CIA estimate for December 1968 (Enclosure 1) suggests a decline of 60,000-70,000. However, at least 10,000 of this decline is attributable to a decline in threat north of the DMZ. Therefore, the true decline in terms of enemy losses is 50,000-60,000. DIA believes that 50,000 is the best estimate due to the lack of data concerning enemy's strength in the fourth quarter of 1969.

Enclosure 6

25X1

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DIA Estimate of Enemy Forces in
Border Nations, 1969

The following is DIA's estimate of the number of enemy personnel who compose the joint estimates and who may have been in adjacent countries at any one time during 1969.

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>REGULAR COMBAT</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE</u>
NVN		
NVA	15,000- 30,000	--
VC	--	--
Total	15,000- 30,000	
LAOS		
NVA	5,000- 10,000	5,000- 10,000
VC	--	--
Total	5,000- 10,000	5,000- 10,000
CAMBODIA		
NVA	5,000- 10,000	0,000- 5,000
VC	10,000- 15,000	5,000- 10,000
Total	15,000-25,000	5,000- 15,000

Enclosure 7

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12 March 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

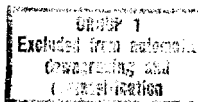
SUBJECT : CIA/DIA Agreed Enemy Strength
Estimates

1. As you know, CIA and DIA have reached agreement on estimates of enemy strength as of end-December 1968 and then quarterly through September 1969. We are currently being asked to join with DIA in making an agreed estimate for end-December 1969. I have, to date, refused to join in such an estimate because the data required to make one in which we can have high confidence are simply not available. My counterparts at DIA agree with my judgment, but nevertheless will probably be compelled to make the estimate because of a request from General McChristian. Lacking an adequate data base, they will be forced to use the so-called gain/loss methodology (a net balancing of inputs such as infiltration and recruitment against losses). This methodology is notoriously unreliable and frequently misleading.

2. Last week we briefed General Cushman on the pitfalls of the gain/loss methodology and the reasons we are unable to make more current estimates. At that time he indicated that he would contact General Bennett and ask him to talk to General McChristian about the problems the community has in coming up with current estimates of enemy strength.

3. In view of General McChristian's latest request, you might want to suggest to General Cushman that if he has not already talked to General Bennett this might be a good time to do so. Such a conversation could not only allay any possible feeling on General Bennett's part that CIA is being uncooperative, but would also provide him with community support in refusing to provide estimates that are not substantiated by hard data. If there should arise an overriding

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need for a current estimate at the highest levels of Government, we would, of course, cooperate fully with DIA, regardless of the data problem.

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Deputy Director
Economic Research

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